

THE FIGHT ON THE SWEEPSTAKES.—Page 169.

THE GO-AHEAD SERIES.

NO MOSS;

OR,

THE CAREER OF A ROLLING STONE.

BY

HARRY CASTLEMON,

AUTHOR OF "THE GUN-BOAT SERIES," "THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN
SERIES," ETC.



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NO MOSS;

OR,

THE CAREER OF A ROLLING STONE.

CHAPTER I.

FIRE QUARTERS.

“OUR bells, sir!” reported the messenger-boy, to the officer who had charge of the deck of the Storm King.

“Very good. Quartermaster, make it so.”

The silvery tones of the little bell rang through the vessel, and immediately there began a great noise and hubbub on the berth-deck, which, but a moment before, had been so quiet and orderly. Songs, shouts of laughter, and noises of every description, that can be made only by a lot of healthy boys just turned loose from their studies, arose through the hatchway, and presently the crew came tumbling up the ladder. The foremost held a guitar under his arm; the one that followed at his heels brought a checker-board; a third had a box of dominoes; and the boy who brought up the rear carried

a single-stick in each hand, and went about challenging every one he met to a friendly trial of skill. Some of the crew walked aft to converse with their officers; the boys with the checkers and dominoes seated themselves on deck to engage in quiet games; he of the single-sticks very soon found an antagonist; and the sailor with the guitar perched himself upon the heel of the bowsprit, and, after tuning his instrument, cleared his throat, preparatory to treating his companions to a song containing the information that he had at one time "Sailed in the good ship Bessie."

The second dog-watch (the hours from six until eight in the evening) was a season of recreation with the students attached to the Storm King, and they never failed to make the most of it. A first-class boy, or an ordinary seaman, could then walk up to the executive officer and challenge him to a contest with broadswords, without committing any breach of discipline; and the first lieutenant could talk sociably with his men, with no fear of being brought before the principal and reprimanded for unofficer-like conduct. The boys played, sang, ran races through the rigging, swung Indian clubs and dumb-bells, and, of course, yelled all the while at the top of their lungs.

The Storm King had now been in possession of the principal of the academy about two months, and was every day growing in favor with the students. Indeed, the addition of a navy to the academy bid fair to cause some radical changes in the programme of studies, for military honors were at a heavy discount, and all the students were work-

ing for positions on board the yacht. No one cared for the colonel's silver eagle now, but every body cast longing eyes toward the anchors he wore in his naval shoulder-straps. The little vessel had had at least one good effect. She had put ambition into the boys, elevated the standard of scholarship, and convinced such lazy fellows as Martin, Rich, and Miller, that they must pay more attention to their books, or be left behind by every student in the academy.

The yacht was in commission now: the Stars and Stripes floated from her peak, and strict naval discipline had been established. She mounted a "Long Tom" amid-ships, in the shape of a six-pounder pivot gun; and on the berth-deck was an ample supply of small arms, consisting of cutlasses, pikes, pistols, and muskets. The crew numbered twenty boys, including captain, lieutenants, masters, midshipmen, warrant and petty officers, and seamen. They were dressed in the uniform of the United States navy; and the first lieutenant, whose whole soul was wrapped up in his duties, had drilled them until they were as handy and expert as the crew of any man-of-war.

The boys never grew tired of their work: they were passionately fond of this new branch of the service, and their efforts to perfect themselves in every department of their duties were amusing, and sometimes ridiculous. On one occasion, a frigate came into the harbor and anchored a short distance from the Storm King. Instantly the students were on the alert, for that was the time to

learn something. Captain Steele ordered his executive to follow the man-of-war in striking the time of day; and this show of respect very soon attracted the attention of the commodore, who, in the afternoon, put off in his gig to visit the Storm King, where he was piped over the side, and received with all the ceremony due his rank. The students obtained liberty, visited the vessel, talked with the old tars on the streets, and the result was soon apparent: the boat's crew began to pull the regular man-of-war stroke; the seamen took to wearing their caps on the back of their heads, hitched up their trowsers with their elbows, grumbled in the most approved sailor fashion when any thing went wrong with them, and, when they walked, they rolled from side to side like vessels in a gale of wind. They remembered all the sea-phrases they heard the old tars use, and never failed to bring them in on all proper occasions. It was certainly laughable to hear a fair-haired little fellow exclaim, "Sink my tarry wig!" whenever he heard any thing that astonished him.

The boatswain's mate of the yacht made friends with the boatswain of the frigate, put himself under instructions, and soon learned to use his whistle with wonderful skill, and to issue his commands in a voice which seemed to come all the way up from his boots. And then, when he gave an order, he would hasten obedience by such expressions as—"Rouse a bit, there!" and "Make a break, now, bullies!" In short, before the frigate left the harbor, the young sailors had made great improvement in

all the minor branches of their profession, and often told one another that their rivals at the academy had a good deal to learn before they could make the crew of the yacht take back seats.

Harry Green was still executive officer of the Storm King. The Court of Inquiry, which he had requested in his report of the attack made on the yacht by the Crusoe band, had been held, and the lieutenant came off with flying colors. The only particular in which he had failed to carry out the orders of his superior officer was in permitting the governor to escape: but that was something he could not prevent. Sam, in his desperation, had jumped overboard before the students could get near enough to seize him; and Harry had but little difficulty in proving, to the satisfaction of the Court, that not only was it impossible to pick him up, but that the attempt to do so would have endangered the vessel and the lives of his crew. Of course, when Harry was cleared, his officers and men were cleared also, and allowed to retain their positions on board the yacht, much to the disappointment of their rivals, who wanted to man the vessel themselves. But, after all, the escape from disgrace had been a very narrow one—so much so, in fact, that the only thing that restrained the students from venting their spite upon the projector of the attack—Tom Newcombe—was the fear of a court-martial, and dismissal from the navy. They were all highly enraged at Tom, and, one day, two of the seamen stopped him on the street, and told him that if he ever got another idea into his head about that yacht,

and attempted to carry it out, they would certainly duck him in the harbor. The interview took place in front of Mr. Newcombe's residence. Tom wisely held his peace, and made no reply to the young sailors' threats until he was safe inside the gate, when he drawled out:

"Didn't I tell you that, if I did not own and sail that yacht, nobody should? Well, I meant it. I've got another idea."

The young tars, being well acquainted with Tom, understood the meaning of this declaration, and hurried off to report the matter to the first lieutenant. Harry listened with evident uneasiness, and, after taking a few turns across the deck, went ashore to consult Captain Steele.

"If it was any body else in the world," said the executive, after he had told his story, "I should laugh at it; but, coming from the source it does, I know it is no laughing matter. Newcombe has given us abundant proof that he is a reckless, bull-headed rascal, and, if he once gets an idea, he sticks to it, and one might as well talk to the wind as to attempt to reason with him. I can not imagine what new scheme he has got into his head, but I am satisfied that the yacht is in danger. What a pity it is that that boy does not spend the time he wastes in studying up plans for mischief, upon his books! he would soon be the best scholar of his age in the village."

Captain Steele, as may be imagined, was not at all pleased with the information he had received. He was afraid of Tom, and he did not hesitate to tell his lieutenant

so. He could not, of course, determine where the threatened danger was coming from, but he was as firmly convinced as was the executive that trouble was brewing in some quarter. He could only order his subordinate to keep a bright lookout at all times, especially at night.

"I'll do that," soliloquized Harry, as he returned to his vessel, "and if Tom Newcombe comes around the upper end of this harbor with any more Crusoe bands, he'll not escape as easily as he did before. I don't want to see him hurt, because his father gave us that vessel, but I'll teach him that I am tired of living in constant fear of having the yacht destroyed and my commission revoked."

This incident happened about two weeks before the commencement of our story, and, during that time, an event occurred that caused considerable excitement in the village, and relieved the lieutenant of a great load of anxiety. It was the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the members of the Crusoe band. Tom Newcombe went up to bed, one night, as usual, and, the next morning, he was gone; and so was his shot-gun, and fishing-tackle, and a good portion of his clothing. Xury, Jack Spaniard, Friday, and Will Atkins were also missing; and, what was more, nothing had ever been seen or heard of them since their departure. They had disappeared as completely as though they had never existed at all. The event had been a nine-days' wonder, but now nearly every one, except the students, had ceased to talk about it. Their curiosity had been aroused, and they

left no stone unturned in their efforts to find the means of satisfying it. They made inquiries of every body, guessed, wondered, and speculated, but all to no purpose; for even the talkative Tom Newcombe had left the village without giving any one so much as a hint of his intended movements. On the evening in question, some of the crew started the all-absorbing topic by saying, as they had probably done twenty times before, that they could not imagine what had become of Tom, or what his object could have been in running away. As far as the object he had in view was concerned, Harry also confessed ignorance; but said he believed Tom had started with the Crusoe band for the North Pole. The boatswain was sure that he was on his way to South America; and one of the quartermasters thought his face was turned toward the Rocky Mountains.

“Now, fellows, I’ll tell you all about it,” said Jackson, who, if he ever forgot the Crusoe men, had only to look at his hand, which bore a long, ragged scar from the wound made by the bayonet that had been thrust through it: “In the first place, imagine the most impossible enterprise in the world—something that nobody but Tom Newcombe would ever think of attempting; in the second, make up your minds which is the most outlandish place on the globe; then put the two together, and you have the key to his last movement.”

“I wonder if he is the leader of the expedition!” said one of the midshipmen; “perhaps Sam Barton has turned up again.”

"Impossible! he could not have lived two minutes in those waves."

"Well, we know one thing," said Harry; "and that is, we are rid of our arch enemy, and the yacht is safe. But I would give something to know what his new idea was."

"Quartermaster, strike eight bells," said the officer of the deck.

The movements that followed this order, showed how successful the lieutenant had been in his efforts to establish discipline among the noisy, fun-loving boys who composed his crew. Scarcely had the bell been struck, when the desperate broadsword fight, that had been going on on the fore-castle for the last quarter of an hour, was brought to a close; dumb-bells, Indian clubs, and checker-boards quickly disappeared; the star-gazers came down out of the rigging; the quartermaster once more put his spy-glass under his arm, and began planking the deck; and quietness and order took the place of the confusion and noise that had reigned supreme a moment before. The hammocks were piped, the anchor watch set, the boatswain's whistle was heard again, followed by the injunction, "Keep silence, fore and aft!" and the crew of the yacht was disposed of for the night. The officers went into the cabin, and those who were to stand watch that night soon turned in; while the others, never forgetting the rivals on shore who were working night and day to dislodge them, resumed their books. On the berth-deck the lights were turned down too low to admit of study,

the rules forbade conversation, and the only thing the students could do was to tumble into their hammocks.

"Now, then," whispered the boatswain's mate, as he settled himself comfortably between the blankets, "I wonder if that lieutenant will allow us to sleep in peace to-night ! He has n't called us up to put out a fire for two weeks."

Among other things in which Harry had drilled his men until they were almost perfect, was fire quarters ; and he had rung so many alarms that the students began to call him the "fire lieutenant." Of course he never took them away from their studies, but he had an uncomfortable habit of calling them up in the night. Harry sometimes pored over his books until nearly twelve o'clock ; and when every one, except himself and the officers and men on watch was asleep, he would come out of his cabin and ring the ship's bell as if his life depended upon it. The crew would tumble out of their hammocks and hurry to their stations, some manning the pump, and others getting out the hose and buckets, and all of them growling lustily to themselves, because they knew there was not a spark of fire on board the vessel. These false alarms, although annoying to the students, had the effect of making them thoroughly posted in their duties ; and Harry was satisfied, that if, by any accident, his little vessel should really catch on fire, the practice the crew had had would enable them to save her. He afterward had reason to congratulate himself that he had been so particular on this point.

At one o'clock, every one on board the Storm King,

except the officers of the deck, quartermaster, and the two seamen who stood the anchor watch, was sound asleep. The night was very dark—so dark that the watch did not see a skiff which approached the vessel, propelled by slow, noiseless strokes. But the skiff was there, and, when it had been brought alongside the yacht, the bow-oarsman arose to his feet, and fastened into the fore-chains with a boat-hook, after which, a figure in the stern sheets placed his hands upon the rail, and drew himself up until he had obtained a view of the vessel's deck. He could not see much on account of the darkness, but his ears told him that the presence of himself and companions was unsuspected; and, having satisfied himself on this point, the visitor, whoever he was, clambered carefully over the rail, and a moment afterward was crouching on deck at the head of the ladder which led down into the fore-castle.

"What's that?" exclaimed one of the watch, suddenly interrupting the story he was relating to his companion.

"I did n't hear any thing," replied the other.

"Well, I imagined I did. Every dark night that I stand watch, I think of the Crusoe band."

"O, they're a hundred miles from here by this time—perhaps more. Go on with your yarn."

The young sailor listened a moment, but as the sound which had attracted his attention was not repeated, he resumed his story; whereupon, the figure at the hatchway arose to his feet, and stealthily descended the ladder. He was gone about five minutes, and then re-appeared, crawled noiselessly across the deck, and had just placed

his hands upon the rail, when he was discovered by one of the watch.

“Hallo! Boat—ship—I mean, man—ahoy!” shouted the young tar, evidently at a loss to determine how he ought to hail a stranger found on deck of his vessel, under such circumstances.

Both the watch made a rush for the mysterious visitor, who disappeared over the rail like a flash ; and, by the time they reached the side, he was in his boat, which was moving off into the darkness. But he did not get away in time to escape recognition by the watch, both of whom stood for an instant as if petrified, and then called out, in amazement and alarm,

“TOM NEWCOMBE!”

“Where?” exclaimed Jackson, the officer of the deck, hurrying forward.

“In his boat there, sir, with half a dozen other fellows. He has been on board the vessel; we caught sight of him just as he was climbing over the rail.”

The officer was thunderstruck. The presence of their evil genius at that hour, and under such circumstances, boded no good to the yacht and her crew, and, for a moment, Jackson stood holding fast to the rail, imagining all sorts of terrible things. He would not have been astonished if the waters of the harbor had suddenly opened to swallow up the vessel and her sleeping company. He even thought he felt the deck rise under his feet, and held his breath, expecting to hear an explosion, and to find himself struggling in the water amid the wreck of the

Storm King. But nothing of the kind happened: the yacht remained right side up; and if Tom Newcombe had placed a barrel of gunpowder in her, with a slow-match attached, intending to blow the vessel and her crew to atoms, there might yet be time to frustrate his designs.

"Quartermaster, spring that rattle!" shouted the officer, as if suddenly awaking out of a sound sleep—"Smith and Simmonds, lower away the jolly-boat."

Jackson ran below to report the matter to the first lieutenant; the sailors hurried off to execute their orders; and, before Tom Newcombe and his companions were out of sight of the yacht, they heard the rattle calling the crew to quarters.

"Wake up, sir," cried Jackson, roughly shaking his superior officer by the shoulder—"Tom Newcombe!"

The second lieutenant knew that the mention of that name would arouse the executive sooner than any thing else.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Harry, "you do n't say so! Where is he?"

"In his boat, now, and going down the harbor at the rate of ten knots an hour. He has been on board this yacht doing some mischief, of course, and I am expecting every instant to find myself going to the bottom. His pirate crew is with him."

"The Crusoe band!" Harry almost gasped.

"There are several fellows with him, and I do n't know who else they can be."

"Call away the jolly-boat, and man her with an armed crew," said Harry. "Mr. Richardson!"

"Here, sir," answered the midshipman, who had just come into the cabin with his boots in one hand, and his coat in the other.

"Take charge of the jolly-boat, pursue those fellows, and capture them, at all hazards, if they can be found. Mr. Jackson, stand by to get the vessel under way immediately."

The second lieutenant sprang up the ladder, followed by the midshipman, and, a few moments afterward, Harry heard the boat's crew scrambling over the side, and the boatswain's whistle calling the men to their stations.

"Am I doomed to live in constant fear of that fellow as long as I remain at the academy?" said the first lieutenant to himself. "What could he have wanted here? I'll have the yacht searched at once, and discover, if I can, what he has been up to."


But the executive soon learned that it was not necessary to search the vessel to find out what Tom Newcombe had been doing, for, just at that moment, he was alarmed by the rapid tolling of the bell, and Jackson burst into the cabin, pale and excited.

"The yacht is on fire, sir!" said he.

Harry, too astonished to speak, hurried on deck, and, to his consternation, saw a dense smoke arising from the fore-hatchway. The students did not grumble now at being called to fire-quarters, for this was not a false alarm; the inside of the galley was a sheet of flames.

CHAPTER II.

SAM BARTON'S HARBORING PLACE.

OM NEWCOMBE seemed to possess, in a remarkable degree, the faculty of creating a disturbance wherever he went, and his re-appearance in the village was the signal for a general commotion. Johnny Harding came in for a share of the trouble, and was the hero of an adventure that gained him an enviable reputation in Newport. In order that the reader may understand how it came about, we must go back and describe some events with which he is not acquainted.

For two weeks after the Spartan sailed with the fisher-boy on board, Tom Newcombe led a most miserable life. His father took especial care that every moment of his time, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, should be occupied with some business or another, and, in Tom's estimation, this was the very worst punishment that could be inflicted upon him. In addition to that, the law against going outside the gate after dark was rigidly enforced; and thus Tom was thrown upon his own resources for recreation.

There were few boys in the village he cared to associate with now. He avoided the students, and Johnny

Harding and his set, as he would a pestilence; but he was not always successful in his efforts to keep out of their way, for he had a good many errands to do about the village, and at almost every corner he met somebody he did not want to see. Besides, Johnny had taken up his position behind Mr. Henry's counter; and, although he had become a steady, well-behaved boy in other respects, he was as full of mischief as ever, and seemed to take unbounded delight in tormenting Tom. Mr. Henry's store was but a short distance from the office; and as Johnny was constantly running up and down the wharf on business, he met Tom frequently, and never failed to make particular inquiries concerning the welfare of the young ruffians who had composed the Crusoe band.

"Ah, *good morning*, captain!" he would say, raising his hand to his cap with a military flourish, "how's the governor? and how does the society come on?"

Tom sometimes made an angry reply; but generally he would take to his heels, and as soon as possible get out of hearing of his tormentor. Nine times in ten he did not better himself any; for, while he was running away from Johnny, he would encounter some one else who had something to say about the yacht or the Crusoe band. He was thus kept continually in hot water, and he knew that such would be his condition as long as he remained in the village. There was one way of escape, and that was to do as Johnny Harding had done, when he came home from the memorable expedition of the Night-Hawks. He saw his folly, acknowledged it, and resolved that his future

life should make some amends for it. He held to this determination; and was now in a fair way to make a man of himself. Tom, however, did not possess the moral courage to do this. He was one of those boys who are always in the right, and he did not believe that the troubles he had got into were the results of his own misdeeds. He laid the blame upon somebody else—principally upon his father, at whom he was highly enraged. He wanted to get out of the village, and he set his wits at work to conjure up some plan to induce the merchant to send him to sea, or permit him to make another contract with Mr. Hayes; but Mr. Newcombe thought the office was the best place for Tom, and told him so in a manner so decided, that the boy knew that argument was useless.

All this while he had been busy with his plan for the organization of a new secret society, but he was obliged to confess that, under the circumstances, it was not likely to amount to any thing. He needed the assistance of the old members of the Crusoe band; but his father had ordered him to have nothing further to do with them, and, more than that, he took care to see that the order was obeyed. Tom, knowing that he was closely watched, kept aloof from the ferry-boys, and when his work for the day was over, he found relief from his troubles by sailing about the bay in the Mystery. One evening he extended his cruise around Block Island; and it was then an incident happened that brought about the events we have yet to describe. He was sailing around a high rocky promontory which formed the southern part of the island,

his mind, as usual, busy with his new scheme, when he was aroused by hearing his name pronounced. He looked toward the shore, and was frightened nearly out of his senses when he discovered a boy, who bore a strong resemblance to Sam Barton, standing on a rock at the foot of the bluff, waving his hat to him. Tom was not superstitious, but he believed, with every one else in Newport, that the governor had deliberately put an end to his existence by jumping into the harbor on that stormy night, and his sudden appearance in that lonely spot was enough to startle him.

“Come ashore, Muley; I want to talk to you.”

The voice certainly sounded like Sam Barton’s, and Tom, astonished and perplexed, brought the *Mystery* up into the wind, and sat gazing at the bluffs as if he hardly knew whether or not it was safe to venture any nearer to it.

“Don’t you know me, Muley?” asked the boy on shore. “I’m Sam Barton.”

“Why, you were drowned,” returned Tom.

“Drowned! Not much, I was n’t. I ketched hold of a spar that happened to be in the water near me, an’ here I am all right.”

Tom, being now convinced that the boy on shore was really the long-lost governor of the *Crusoe* band, filled away, and, when the *Mystery* had approached within a few feet of the rock, Sam said:

“Now, Muley, you’re close enough. I want to ask you one question before you come ashore. Have you gone back on me?”

"No, I have n't," replied Tom, who had already told himself that the meeting with Sam was most fortunate, and that, with his assistance, his new idea could be successfully carried out, "but I have a small account against you. You made me captain of the yacht, without my asking you for the position, and then refused to obey my orders, and broke me without one word of excuse or apology. I didn't like that very well, but as our expedition proved a failure, I don't care so much about it. What are you doing, governor? and how came you here?"

"Are you sure you won't tell any body in the village that you saw me?" demanded Sam. "You see, I am afraid of Bobby Jennings and Mr. Grimes, an' I don't care about tellin' you too much till I know how fur you can be trusted."

"I won't say a word to any body—honor bright," replied Tom.

"Wall, then, come ashore, and let me get into your boat, an' I'll show you where I live."

Tom complied with the request; and the governor, after shaking him cordially by the hand, and compelling him to promise, over and over again, that he would keep every thing that passed between them a profound secret, seated himself at the helm, and turned the Mystery's head down the shore. The wind was blowing briskly; and at the end of the promontory was a chain of sunken rocks, that extended a considerable distance below the foot of the island, and over which the waves dashed and foamed, throwing the spray higher than the Mystery's

mast-head. These rocks were quite as dangerous as they looked; for more than one vessel, in attempting to enter Newport harbor during a gale, had gone to pieces there. They presented an insurmountable obstacle to the young navigators of the village, who had explored every little bay and inlet on the island, except those in the vicinity of "The Shoals," as these rocks were called. The slightest breeze would there raise a sea that threatened destruction to any thing that came within its reach; and when the weather was calm, the rocks could be seen above the water in all directions, standing so close together that the bravest of the boys dared not risk their boats among them. Tom knew the place well; and we can imagine his astonishment when he saw that Sam was shaping his course as if he intended to pass between the rocks and the bluffs on the island.

"Keep out, governor!" he shouted, in alarm. "You'll smash us all to pieces if you go in there."

"Now, you just trust me, Muley, an' I'll see that no harm don't come to you or your boat," replied Sam, confidently. "I've got a safe harborin' place here, and this is the way to get to it."

Tom had seen the time that he would have positively refused to trust his fine boat among those rocks. He was naturally a very timid boy, and, although he had been accustomed to the water and to sail-boats from the time he was large enough to handle a tiller, a fresh breeze and a few waves always made him extremely nervous. But the events of the last few months had developed in

him at least one quality which his companions had never supposed him to possess. He was getting to be a very reckless sort of fellow; and, although he clutched his seat and held his breath when the *Mystery* dashed in among the waves off the point, he looked quite unconcerned. He was really frightened, however, and that was not to be wondered at. Sam was attempting something that no one had ever had the courage to try before; and no doubt Tom felt a good deal as did the mariners of old when approaching the terrible Cape Bojador, which they believed marked the boundaries of navigation. But the governor knew just what he was doing. He proved himself an excellent pilot, and in a few moments he rounded the point, and, entering a little bay where the water was comparatively quiet, he directed the boat's course toward what appeared to be a solid wall of rock. A nearer approach to it, revealed a narrow creek that led into the island. Sam steered into it, skillfully avoiding the rocks on either side; and when the *Mystery's* bow was run upon the sand, Tom jumped ashore and looked about him.

"Well, Muley, what do you think of me for a sailor?" asked Sam, looking at his companion with a smile of triumph. "Aint that something worth braggin' on? I wouldn't be afraid to take your father's biggest vessel through there."

"But how would you get her out again?" asked Tom. "You could n't beat up against the wind, for the channel is n't wide enough."

“Of course not; I could n’t take the Mystery out that way, much less a big ship. Did you see them high rocks at the lower end of the shoals? Well, when you want to go home, I shall take you right past them.”

“O, now, I won’t go,” drawled Tom, looking at Sam in great amazement. “I did notice them, and I know the waves must be ten or fifteen feet high there.”

“That’s nothing. The channel runs close alongside them rocks, an’ is wide an’ deep enough to float a frigate. If you want to go home in your boat, that’s your only chance.”

While this conversation was going on, Tom had made a hurried examination of the governor’s harboring-place, which was far ahead of the cave in the village, and must have been expressly intended to serve as a refuge for some person, who, like Sam, thought it necessary to keep aloof from his fellow-men. The creek was simply an arm of the bay, which did not extend more than twenty yards into the land, where it formed a cove large enough to shelter half a dozen sail-boats. It was surrounded by precipitous cliffs, which hung threateningly over the water and whose sides were so thickly covered with bushes and trees that the rays of the sun could not penetrate through them. The entrance was effectually concealed by rocks which had fallen from the bluffs above, and a fleet might have coasted along the shore without discovering it. On one side of the cove was a little grass plat, which sloped gently down to the water’s edge, and here Sam had erected a rude cabin, which was furnished with a bed,

fire-place, cooking utensils, and other articles of comfort and convenience. A skiff was drawn up on the bank in front of the cabin, a sail and a pair of oars rested against the eaves, and in a frying-pan, which stood on a bench beside the door, were several fish which Sam had caught for his supper.

"Well, Muley, what do you think of it?" asked the governor, when his visitor had examined every thing to his satisfaction. "I'm livin' Crusoe life now, aint I? I'd like it a heap better than ferryin', if I only had something besides fish and water-melons to eat."

"Water-melons!" repeated Tom: "where do you get them?"

"O, I hooks 'em. There's plenty on the island, an' I was just goin' out after some when I saw you. I've got one left, an' it's in the spring, behind the cabin, coolin' off."

"How did you get out without your boat?" asked Tom, looking up at the overhanging cliffs. "You can't climb those rocks."

"You couldn't, but I can, 'cause I know where the path is. You see, I am an old fox, an' I've got two holes to my burrow. If Mr. Grimes an' Bobby Jennings find out where I am, an' come here with a boat to ketch me, they'll see me goin' up them rocks like a goat; an' if they come down the path—which they aint no ways likely to do—I'll take to my boat. Come with me now, Muley, an' I'll show you something."

Tom followed the governor around the cabin, past the

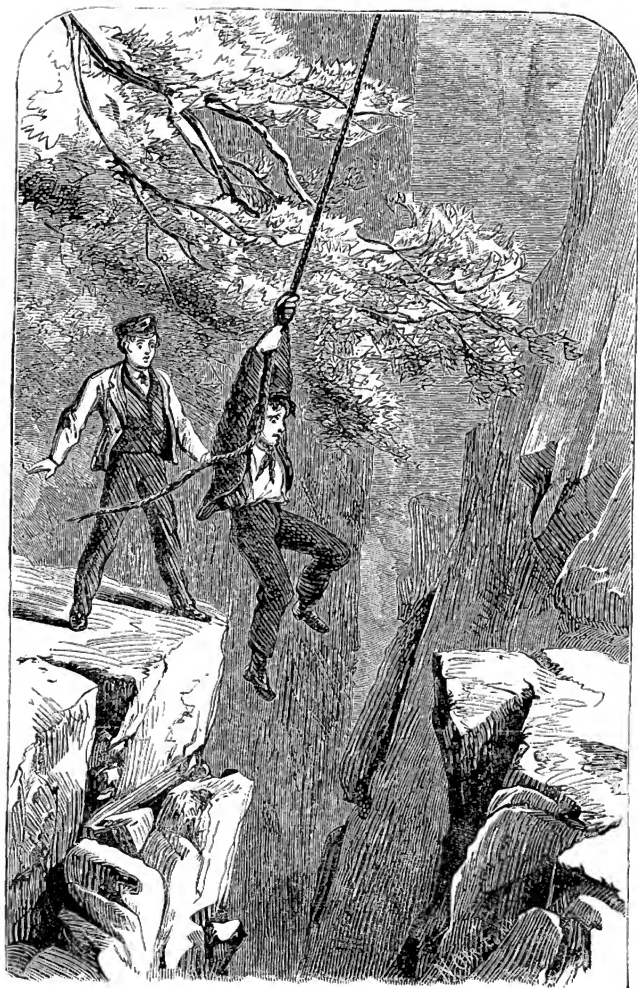
spring in which was the water-melon Sam had spoken of, and which he said they would eat when they came down, and presently found himself standing at the foot of a narrow, winding fissure, that led to the top of the cliff. This was one of the holes to Sam's "burrow"—the path of which he had spoken. It proved to be very steep and slippery, and, before they had accomplished half the distance to the summit, Tom was obliged to sit down and recover his breath. The second time he stopped, he found before him a yawning chasm which extended across the path, and seemed to check their farther progress.

"Can you jump it, Muley?" asked the governor.

Now, as the chasm was fully ten feet wide, and Tom could see no chance for a running start, he thought this question entirely unnecessary. No boy who had any desire to live would have thought of attempting to jump it; for, if he missed his footing when he landed on the opposite side, he would fall about forty feet. That was what Tom thought, and that was what he told the governor.

"Well, I have done it many a time," said Sam, "an' I can do it again."

As he spoke, he stepped to a tree beside the path, and began to unfasten a rope which led down from some place above—Tom could not see where, for the bushes that covered the side of the cliff were too thick. Grasping the rope with both hands, the governor stepped back a few feet, then ran swiftly to the brink, and, springing into the air, alighted safely on the other side of the chasm.



SAM BARTON'S HARBORING PLACE.—Page 29.

"I don't like that way of getting over," said Tom, looking down at the rocks beneath him; "that rope might break."

"I'll risk that," was the reply. "It's strong enough to hold half a dozen fellers like us, an' it is made fast up there to a tree as big around as your body. Ketch it, Muley, an' come on."

The governor let go the rope, which swung back to Tom's side of the chasm, and the latter, with a good deal of trembling and hesitation, prepared to take his turn. He made two or three false starts—stepping back for a short run, as he had seen the governor do, and then suddenly stopping when he reached the brink of the chasm, and thought what would become of him if the rope should break loose from the tree above; but his fear of being laughed at was stronger than his dread of the rocks, and finally he drew in a long breath, and launched himself into the air. Somewhat to his astonishment, he accomplished the feat very easily; and when he found himself safe on the opposite side, he straightened up and looked at the governor as if he had done something wonderful.

Sam fastened the rope to a bush, and once more led the way up the path, which grew steeper and more difficult the nearer they approached the summit. In some places the cliff was quite perpendicular, and the only way they could advance at all was by drawing themselves up by the bushes that grew out of the crevices of the rocks. They reached the top at last, however, and then Sam

stopped, and, pointing through the leaves, showed Tom several men at work in a field, and a farm-house in the distance.

"I hooks them fellers' water-melons," observed the governor.


"What if they should discover us now, and come after us?" said Tom.

"Let 'em come. They would n't find us, I reckon; an', even if they did, they could n't ketch us, fur they could n't get across that gully. But they do n't dream of any body's livin' down here, in this dark hole. If they miss their water-melons, they lay the blame on some of the village boys."

Tom did not care to remain long on the cliff, for he was afraid that something might happen to direct the attention of the farmers toward him and his companion, and he had no desire to run a race with any body down that steep path. He might make a misstep, and that would be a calamity, for he would bring up among the rocks at the bottom of the chasm, and there would not be enough left of him to carry out his new idea by the time he got there. But, although it was quite as difficult and tedious a task to go down the cliff as to ascend it, no accident happened to them. They reached the chasm in safety, crossed it with the aid of the rope—this time without any hesitation on Tom's part—and were soon stretched on the grass in front of the cabin, refreshing themselves with the water-melon.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW PLAN.

OM was no less delighted than astonished at what he had seen in the governor's harboring place. The cove was so romantic, and it was so cool and pleasant down there among the rocks and trees! It was a famous place for reflection, and, as Tom stretched himself out on the grass, and looked up at the bluffs above him, he told himself that he would be perfectly willing to pass the remainder of his existence there. What could be more glorious than the life of ease Sam was leading? He had no business to bother him, no father to keep an eye on all his movements, and no merciless village boys to torment him; but he was free from all care and trouble, was his own master, and passed his time serenely in doing nothing. That was just the life that suited Tom. If other boys were foolish enough to allow themselves to be shut up in an academy for ten months in the year, or were willing to drag out a miserable existence within the dingy walls of a store or office, that was their look-out, and not his. He would not do it for any body. He would leave the village before he was twenty-four hours older; and if he

ever placed his foot inside its limits again, it would be because he could not help himself.

"Governor," said he, "you always were a lucky fellow. Here you have been during the last two weeks, enjoying yourself to the utmost, and free to go and come when you please, while I have been cooped up in the village, scarcely daring to stir out of my father's sight, compelled to work like a slave for eight hours in the day, and have been badgered and tormented until I have sometimes wished that the earth would open and swallow up Newport and everybody in it, myself included. You must be happy here."

"Well, I should be," replied the governor, "if I only had something good to eat, an' was sartin that Bobby Jennings an' Mr. Grimes would never trouble me."

"You may make yourself easy on that score," said Tom. "Bob Jennings is a thousand miles from here by this time. He has gone to China, and will not be back for three years."

As Tom said this he settled back on his elbow, and proceeded to give the governor a history of all that had happened in the village since the night the Crusoe men made the attack on the Storm King. He told how Harry Green had taken him and the rest of the band to the academy as prisoners of war; repeated what the principal had said to them; explained how Bob had lost his boat, and found a friend in the man who had paid him the forty dollars in gold by mistake; and how he had obtained a berth on board the Spartan, and gone to sea, leaving his mother

well provided for. He wound up by dwelling with a good deal of emphasis upon the resolve he had made to pay off Harry Green for what he had done, and hinted, mysteriously, that the first lieutenant would live to regret that he had ever presumed to act contrary to the wishes of Tom Newcombe. Sam could scarcely believe some portions of the story that related to Bob Jennings. He was sure that the fisher-boy had given one of the gold pieces for the Go Ahead No. 2; and, even if he had not, the governor could not understand how a boy so hard pressed as Bob had been—who had more than once been at a loss to know where his next meal was coming from—could resist the temptation to use a portion of the money, especially when he knew that the man who had paid it to him would never be the wiser for it. Sam acknowledged to himself that the truth of the old adage he had so often heard Bob repeat—that “honesty is the best policy”—had been fully exemplified.

“Now, that’s what comes of bein’ born lucky,” said he, after he had thought the matter over. “That ar’ Bobby Jennings is a gentleman, now, an’ goes about holden’ up his head like he was somebody; while I am a rascal an’ an outlaw, not darin’ to show my face outside this yere cove, an’ livin’ in constant fear of Mr. Grimes, an’ the State’s prison. This is a hard world, Tommy.”

“O, now, have you just found it out?” drawled Tom. “If you had seen as much trouble as I have, you would have come to that conclusion long ago. I heard Harry

Green say, one day, that it was the very best world he ever saw, and that it could not possibly be any better. If I was as lucky as he is, I would say so too. He holds high positions among those Spooneys at the academy, every body in the village speaks well of him, and he gets along through the world without the least difficulty; while I—just look at me! I won't stand it; now, that's all about it! I'll raise a breeze in that village one of these fine days, that will make the people there think they have never known any thing about Tom Newcombe."

Tom always worked himself into a passion when he talked about the wrongs he imagined the world had done him; and as he dwelt upon Harry Green's success—which he foolishly attributed to luck, instead of downright earnest labor—and drew a contrast between their stations in life, he got angrier with every sentence he uttered; and when he declared that he "wouldn't stand it," he jumped up and stamped his foot furiously upon the ground, to emphasize his words.

"Well, now, Muley, I can't see the use of talkin' on that ar' way," said the governor. "The world has been mighty mean to us, but it might have used us a heap worse."

"O, now, I can't see it!" drawled Tom. "I'd like to know if I was n't used just as badly as I could be when I lost that yacht?"

"Of course not. You might have been put in jail, like the rest of the fellers."

"What fellows?"

"Why, Friday, Will Atkins, an' all our crowd."

"They are not in jail. They are ferrying on the harbor every day, and nobody troubles them. If you were to go back to the village, no one would say a word to you."

The governor shut one eye, and looked at Tom through the half-closed lids of the other. "Do you see any thing green about me?" he asked. "We sunk the skiff—every body knows that—an' it wasn't no fault of our'n that Bobby Jennings got her agin. That's contrary to law, an' Mr. Grimes, bein' an officer, is bound to put us through for it. He thinks that by lettin' them fellers alone he will get me to go back to the village, and then he'll arrest the whole of us, an' pack us off to jail. But I'm too sharp fur him. He said I could n't pull no wool over his eyes, an' he'll find that he can't pull none over mine, neither."

"But I tell you that every body thinks you are drowned," said Tom.

"That's all mighty nice, but it do n't fool Governor Barton. I just aint going back to Newport, 'cause I know it aint safe. I jumped overboard from the yacht 'cause I did n't want to let Mr. Grimes get his hands on me, an' I'd be the biggest kind of a dunce to put myself in his way ag'in. But I say, Muley, do n't it beat all the world how them 'cademy swells got out of the hold that night?"

"It does n't beat me; I know all about it. You broke me, did n't you?"

"I did; but I am sorry fur it now."

"It is rather late in the day to make apologies, governor. If you had treated me like a gentleman, those students would n't have got out."

"I do n't understand you, Muley."

"Well, I let them out. You understand me now, do n't you?"

Sam, upon hearing this, started up from the ground and glared at Tom so savagely that the latter began to be alarmed.

"I could n't help it, governor," said he. "It's my plan to get even with any fellow who imposes upon me. You played me a mean trick, and I paid you off in your own coin."

"Well, the thing is done now," said Sam, settling back on his elbow, "an' it can't be undone. Perhaps it was the best thing that could have happened to us, fur, since I have had time to think the matter over, I have come to the conclusion that our cruise would not have been a long one. That was a terrible storm, Muley, an' the waves were uncommon high. I found that out the minute I got into 'em. I never expected to come out alive, an' I had n't any more than touched the water, till I'd been willin' to give something nice to get back on board the yacht. But luck was on my side for once, an' throwed a spar in my way. Where it come from I don't know; but it was there, an' it saved me. It drifted into the harbor, carryin' me with it; an' when I come to a place where I thought I could swim, I struck out for the

wharf. It was then almost daylight, an', as I did n't care about bein' seen, I found a safe hidin'-place an' stayed there durin' the day, thinkin' an' layin' my plans. When night come, I stole this skiff an' started for the island. The next day I found this cove; an', seein' in a minute that it was just the place for me, I brought my boat around, an' I've been here ever since. I've made three visits to the village—that's the way I come to learn the channels—and I've got my bed, all my clothes, an' several other handy little articles I found layin' around. I wanted to see you an' find out what was goin' on, but I did n't dare to show myself, fur I did n't know but you had gone back on me. Rats desert a sinkin' ship, you know, an' when a feller's in disgrace, everybody gets down on him. I'm glad to hear that the other fellers are all right, 'cause I've done a heap of thinkin' since I've been here. Have you given up all idea of findin' Crusoe's island?"

"No, I have n't," replied Tom. "I'd start to-morrow, if I could find any one to go with me. What have you been thinking about, governor?"

"About gettin' away from here. I can't stay on this island much longer, 'cause it's too near the village; an' another thing, grub's scarce. I'm going over to Newport this very night to see them fellers; an' if they'll stick to us, we'll see some fun yet. Will you go?"

"I will," answered Tom, readily; "that is, if you will help me square yards with the principal of the academy."

"I'll do it; there's my hand on it. I always knowed

you were a brick, Muley, an' now I'll tell you what I have been thinkin' about since we've been sittin' here. In the first place," continued the governor, helping himself to another slice of the water-melon, "I take it fur granted that Friday, Will Atkins, Xury, an' Jack Spaniard will go with us, an' help us carry out our idea. I know them fellers, an' I am sure they can be depended on. We'll start the Crusoe band ag'in. I will be the head man, as I was before; an' if you'll promise, honor bright, not to try any tricks on us, we'll call you cap'n, an' we'll give you command of the vessel, when we get her."

"All right," said Tom, "I'll not play any tricks on you as long as you obey orders and behave yourselves; but if you get up a mutiny, and try to make me a foremast hand, as you did before, I'll knock the whole thing higher than a kite. You must bear two things in mind, governor: I know more about managing these matters than you do, and I am a better sailor. I was president of the Gentlemen's Club, and grand commander of the Night-Hawks. That runaway expedition from the academy, that made such a stir in the village, originated with me, and I carried it out successfully; and that's more than any other boy in Newport could have done. I was second in command of the Swallow during that cruise, and, if I had had one or two more friends, I would have been made master of her when the fellows put Rich out. If I go with you, I must be captain of the vessel; and, more than that, you must promise, in the presence of

the band, to stand by me, and see that my orders are obeyed to the very letter."

"I'll agree to that, Muley," said Sam.

"Call me captain," interrupted Tom; "I never did like that other name. The second thing you must remember is, that, if you and I are friends, the expedition will be successful; but, if you make an enemy of me, I'll ruin it in some way or another. Let's hear the rest of your plan."

"I can tell it in few words," replied Sam: "If the fellers promise to go with us, we must find a vessel somewhere. We want a good one, fur there's no knowin' how many storms we may get into before we reach our island. I'd like to have that yacht, 'cause she's a good sea-boat, an' sails like lightnin'; but them 'cademy swells will always be on the watch now, an' when you see Governor Barton within reach of them bayonets ag'in, you'll see a weasel asleep. Our best plan would be to take the Sweepstakes. 'Squire Thompson leaves her in the harbor, with no one to watch her, an' it'll be the easiest thing in the world to board her, some dark night, an' make off with her. That part of the business don't trouble me none, but the grub does. I s'pose the few crackers we had on hand when we made the attack on the yacht are lost, or eat up; an' Atkins said there was not much more'n twenty dollars in the treasury. That wouldn't be enough to buy grub fur us six fellers, even if we had it; but I know it's been fooled away fur peanuts an' candy long before this time. Of course, we can't

go to sea without something to eat, an' the only way we can get it is to hook it."

"Steal it!" drawled Tom. "O, now, if that's the way you are going to get your supplies, you needn't ask me to help, for I won't do it."

"Mebbe you'll be willin' enough to eat the grub when we get it," returned Sam.

"That's a different matter. Of course, I'll not starve if there's is any thing on board the vessel to eat, but I won't steal. Where are you going to get your provisions?"

"At Mr. Henry's store."

"O, now, suppose you should be caught? That would kill the expedition at once. Johnny Harding sleeps in the store every night."

"Does he?" exclaimed the governor. "That's something I did n't calculate on; but I guess we aint much afraid of him. If we can only get inside the store without awaking him, we can manage him easy enough. I'll have a club, or something, an' the sight of it will keep him quiet while the other fellers are securin' the provisions."

Tom was amazed at the coolness with which the governor discussed this villainous plan for supplying the commissary of the Crusoe band. He was hardly prepared for so desperate an undertaking, and yet, at the same time, he had determined upon the perpetration of an offense which was even more atrocious in the eyes of the law than the one Sam had proposed. When it

first entered his mind, he had been terrified at the bare thought of it; but he had pondered upon it so often, and had weighed so many schemes for its accomplishment, that the enormity of the crime had finally dwindled into insignificance. Perhaps, if he had spent as much time in thinking about robbing Mr. Henry's store as he had about destroying the Storm King, Sam's proposition would not have startled him in the least. The fact was, Tom had long been going down hill, in a moral point of view. Like every one else who does not advance, he was retrograding. There is no such thing as standing still in this world. A boy grows better or worse every day of his life. The change may be so gradual as to escape the notice of those around him, but it is, nevertheless, surely going on. The truth of this had been fully illustrated in Tom's case. From studying up schemes for mischief, which were simply intended to amuse himself and companions, he had come, by easy steps, to think seriously of attempting a crime, to revenge himself upon his father, the students, and the principal of the academy. He did not expect to accomplish it without being discovered; and he knew that, if he was captured, his punishment would be something more terrible than any thing he had yet experienced. But this thought did not deter him. He was resolved to carry out his new idea, if within the bounds of possibility, and to escape the consequences by running away from the village.

"Well, cap'n, what do you say?" asked the governor, after Tom had sat gazing thoughtfully at the ground for

several minutes. "We must have something to eat, and that's the only way I know of to get it."

"You can do as you please," was the answer. "I shall not take any part in robbing the store; there is too much danger in it."

"Well, we can get along without your help. You can stand by and look on. You said something about gettin' even with them 'cademy swells, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did. I am going to burn that yacht."

It was now Sam's turn to be astonished. He started up and looked at his companion as if he hardly believed that he could be in earnest.

"O, I mean it, governor," said Tom, with a decided shake of his head.

"Now, if you will listen to me, cap'n', you will keep away from them 'cademy fellers. They think a heap of that little vessel, an' if they ketch you tryin' to burn her, they won't be no ways backward about givin' you a good drubbin'. Besides, you'll have Mr. Grimes after you."

"I have thought the matter over thoroughly, Sam, and nothing you can say will turn me from my purpose. Do you suppose that, after all that has happened, I am going to let those fellows enjoy quiet possession of the Storm King? No, sir; I won't do it. She rightfully belongs to me, and if I can't have her, nobody shall. When I meet those sailors strutting about the village, showing off their new uniforms, and see Harry Green planking his quarter-deck with all the dignity of an admiral, I feel as if I'd like to sink the vessel and her crew

in the deepest part of the ocean. If my father had given her to me, as he ought to have done, I should now be the happiest boy in the world; as it is, I am the most miserable. I don't expect you and the band to run any risks, governor. All I ask of you is to pull me alongside the yacht, and I'll do the rest. I'll slip on board with a bottle of coal-oil in my pocket, and if I can once get into the galley without being discovered, I'll finish her."

The governor gazed at Tom in silent wonder and admiration. The latter's plan for "squaring yards" with the principal was likely to involve him in considerable danger, and Sam could not help acknowledging to himself that it was something he would not dare undertake. He had great respect for courage, and he believed that he had been sadly mistaken in Tom. He began to stand in awe of him, too; for a boy who could conceive of such an exploit, and talk so calmly about it, after the experience he had already had with the students, might indeed prove a dangerous person to make an enemy of. The governor secretly determined to keep on the right side of Tom.

"Well," said he, at length, "I promised that I would help you, an' I'll stick to it."

"If you don't, I'll do the job alone," declared Tom. "I'll board the yacht some night, and set fire to her, even if I know that the students will catch me in the very act. But it is getting dark, and I must go home."

"Come ag'in to-morrow afternoon, cap'n," said the

governor. "I'll have the other fellers here then, an' we can talk the matter over."

Tom promised to be on hand; and after Sam had piloted his boat out of the cove into still water, he filled away for home, feeling happier than he had done for many a day. We are so well acquainted with him, that it is scarcely necessary to say that he passed a sleepless night, and that during the following day he lived in a state of constant excitement. Of course he was certain of success—he always was, in spite of his former experience—and of course he gave full sway to his imagination, and indulged in pleasing anticipations of the life of glorious ease upon which he was soon to enter. There would be no Johnny Harding to bother him (Tom spent a good deal of time in trying to decide upon some plan to punish Johnny before he left the village); no stern, unreasonable father to interfere with his grand ideas; no care or trouble of any description to mar his happiness; but his days would be passed in one continual round of enjoyment. Every one who came in contact with him noticed that he was in wonderful spirits—not morose and sullen as he had lately been, but gay and active, and, for a wonder, industrious. This was enough to excite the suspicions of his father, who watched him more closely than ever, but could discover nothing wrong.

Tom remained at the office until four o'clock, and then went home. He kept the back streets, to avoid meeting any of his acquaintances, but, to his intense disgust, he ran against two of the crew of the Storm King, in front

of his father's house. They were the ones who threatened him with a bath in the harbor if he attempted to carry out any more of his plans against the yacht, and whom Tom alarmed by declaring that he had another idea already.

"O, now, I'd like to see you duck me in the harbor," drawled Tom. "If you think you can scare me, you are very much mistaken. I'll astonish you, one of these days."

"You had better be careful how you talk, captain," said one of the young tars, placing his hand on the gate as if he had half a mind to follow Tom into the yard; "we are in no humor to listen to any threats."

"Now, hav'n't I told you a dozen times that I want you to quit calling me captain?" whined Tom. "I've stood your insults just as long as I am going to. I've got a splendid idea."

Tom turned on his heel, and walked down the lawn toward the wharf where the *Mystery* lay; and when he had hoisted the sails, he started for the island, to keep his appointment with Sam Barton. On the way he overtook and passed a yawl, in which were seated the four members of the *Crusoe* band; and the significant manner in which they shook their heads at Tom, satisfied him that the governor had talked the matter over with them, and that they were ready to join the expedition.

He found Sam on the rock where he had met him the day before; and when he had piloted the *Mystery* into the cove, he conducted Tom up the path that led to the

summit of the bluff, and together they returned to the rock, to await the arrival of the other members of the band. They came at length, and in a few minutes the yawl was lying in the cove beside the Mystery, and the Crusoe men were seated on the grass in front of the cabin, talking over their plans.

The arrangements for the cruise were speedily completed. It was unanimously agreed by the band that the only way to get their provisions was to rob Mr. Henry's store (to Tom's great surprise, not the slightest objection was made to this proposition); that they should capture the Sweepstakes, and assist Tom in destroying the yacht; that Sam should be chief of the band, Tom captain of the vessel, and Xury, in view of the skill he had exhibited in navigating the yacht down the harbor on that stormy night, should be first mate. It was further agreed that the members of the band should go back to the village, collect all the articles of the outfit, and, as soon as it grew dark, return to the island, where they would remain concealed until they were ready to start on their cruise.

"You see," explained the governor, "when you five fellers run away, it'll be sure to raise a big fuss, and mebbe Tommy's father will try to find him. But he'll never think of lookin' fur him so near the village; an' here we'll stay, as snug an' comfortable as bugs in a rug. The fuss will die out after awhile, an' then, some dark night, we'll pay our last visit to Newport."

This programme was duly carried out; and, while

every body was wondering what had become of the run-aways, and Mr. Newcombe was sending his tugs up and down the bay, in all directions, in the hope of hearing some tidings of the missing Tom, he was safely sheltered in Sam Barton's retreat, enjoying a foretaste of Crusoe life, happy in the society of the young vagabonds he had chosen for his companions, and never wasting a thought upon the home and friends he had deserted.

CHAPTER IV.

TOM IN TROUBLE.



FOR the first time in a good many months, Tom was willing to acknowledge that he was a happy boy. The life he led in Sam Barton's harboring-place exactly suited him. He had plenty to eat, no work to do, and nothing to trouble him. By virtue of his rank, he was exempt from all camp duty; and the only labor he had to perform during the day-time was to dispose of his meals when Friday said they were ready. When he felt so inclined, he took part in the conversation, and discussed with the others the best methods of carrying out the plans they had determined upon; but he believed the position he held warranted the display of a little dignity on his part, and he generally kept aloof from all his companions, except the governor, and spent the most of his time in dozing and building air-castles. If the Storm King had been destroyed, he would have been willing to pass the remainder of his days in the cove. That would save him the trouble and inconvenience of a long voyage at sea, which, reckless as he was, he was in no hurry to undertake. What if the Sweepstakes should be caught out in a storm, like the one they

had experienced the night they made the attack on the yacht? The captain did not like to think about this; but the question would now and then force itself upon him, and he finally determined that, if he found himself likely to get into trouble, he would shirk the responsibility by turning the command of the vessel over to his mate.

On the evening of the fourteenth day after the Crusoe men had taken up their abode in the cove, Tom lay upon the grass, gazing into the water, and lazily fanning himself with his hat. The band had been employed, during the day, in enlarging the cabin, and Tom had condescended to lend a very little assistance, and was now resting after his labors. A fire was burning brightly under the bluff, and, before it, supported upon sticks driven into the ground, were half a dozen fine fish, which, under the influence of the heat, were emitting an odor that would have tempted an epicure. A coffee-pot simmered and sputtered on a bed of coals that had been raked out on one side of the fire, and on the other stood Friday, the cook, watching some potatoes that were roasting in the ashes. A short distance from the fire was the table, laid for supper. It was a little knoll, thickly covered with grass, which answered the purpose of a tablecloth. The most prominent object upon it was a huge piece of beech bark, which did duty as a bread-plate—only it was filled with crackers, instead of bread; and, judging by the quantity it contained, Friday must have thought his companions would be very hungry after their

day's work. Around it were arranged the dishes with which each member of the band had been required to provide himself—a tin plate and cup, and also a spoon, knife, and fork. Two more pieces of bark lay near the fire, waiting to receive the fish and potatoes.

The outfit provided by the band for their former expedition, and which fell into the hands of the students when they recaptured their vessel, had been restored to the owners by the principal, and they had brought it to the island with them. Will Atkins was now engaged in stowing it away in the cabin, Xury was arranging the beds, and Jack Spaniard was fixing up some brackets to receive the guns.

The governor was off reconnoitering. He had issued orders prohibiting his men from going outside the cove in the day-time, but he himself ascended to the upper world at least once in every two or three hours, to see what was going on, and to satisfy himself that the farmer on whose land the cove was situated had seen nothing to arouse his suspicions.

"Now, then," said Friday, "supper's ready. Will Atkins, go after the governor."

"Who made you an officer?" replied Atkins. "Go yourself."

"Now, look here," exclaimed Tom, raising himself on his elbow, and looking indignantly at the cook, "by whose authority do you issue commands here? There are a captain and mate in this society now, and all orders must pass through them."

"I forgot," said Friday. "Cap'n, will you tell somebody to call the governor?"

"Mr. Mate," drawled Tom, "be kind enough to send a man after the governor."

"Will Atkins," said Xury, "go up an' tell the governor that if he wants any grub he'd best be gettin' down here."

The order came from the proper authority this time, and through the proper channels, and Atkins could not refuse to obey.

This style of passing orders had been introduced by Tom, and was what he called the "man of war routine." He insisted that it was no more than right that all the officers should have something to do with whatever was going on; and, after a few objections from Sam, who did not like to surrender any of his authority, he had carried his point. The governor was sharp enough to see, after a little reflection, that this rule, if strictly carried out, would establish him more firmly in his position than ever before. By allowing his officers to show their authority on all occasions, they would be kept good natured; and if any trouble arose in the band, he could depend upon their assistance and support. There were two among the Crusoe men, however, who were not at all pleased with this state of affairs, and they were Will Atkins and Jack Spaniard. By carrying out Tom's system they were made hewers of wood and drawers of water to their companions; and Will Atkins, who was a turbulent fellow, declared that he would n't stand it—that there would be a big fuss

in the society some day, if the officers persisted in making a servant of him. He always obeyed orders, because he was afraid to refuse; but he growled about it like any old sailor.

"I think this is a purty how-de-do," said he, sullenly, as he started off to obey the mate's command. "It's 'Will Atkins, do this!' 'Will Atkins, do that!' That lazy governor, an' Muley, an' Xury can set around an' do nothin'; but Atkins can't have a minute's peace."

"Go on, and obey the order," said Tom, sternly. "If I hear another word out of you, I'll report you to the governor."

This thread silenced the dissatisfied member of the Crusoe band. He knew, by experience, that the chief had a very unpleasant way of dealing with rebellious spirits, and fear of bodily harm kept him quiet.

By the time Friday had dished up his supper, Atkins returned with the governor, who threw himself upon the grass at the head of the table, while his officers seated themselves on each side of him. He passed his cup to the cook to be filled with coffee, and, as he did so, he ran his eye over the table, and smiled with great satisfaction.

"This is a heap better grub than I had while I lived here alone," said he. "Friday, you know I am heavy on taters; why did n't you cook more of 'em?"

"Them's the last," was the answer.

"Then we must lay in a new supply," said Sam. "We'll go up after dark, an' hook a bushel or so. I've been watchin' them fellers up there, fur the last half hour;

an' I notice they have left a good many piles of taters in the field. It'll be the easiest thing in the world fur us to get as many as we want."

The matter was settled without any further remarks. The governor's orders had thus far been received and obeyed without comment; and so small and uninteresting an enterprise as robbing a potato-patch was not worth talking about. The Crusoe men had done such things so often that they thought no more of them than they did of going fishing.

But this expedition was destined to be rather more exciting than any of a similar kind in which they had ever engaged; and if they had only known what was to happen before morning, and could have looked far enough into the future to see the long string of events that was to result from the governor's order, it is probable that they would one and all have refused duty.

Supper over, the Crusoe men lounged on the grass, in front of the cabin, and talked of what they had done, and what they intended to do—all except Friday, who busied himself in clearing the table, and washing the dishes. At sunset it was quite dark in the cove; but the governor knew there was still plenty of light on the cliffs above, and he waited nearly two hours more before he gave the signal for action.

"I reckon we can be movin' now," said he, at length. "I do n't s'pose there is any danger, but, of course, it will be well for us to keep our eyes an' ears open. If them fellers up there hav n't found out by this time that there's

something goin' on, it aint no fault of our'n; fur we've made mighty free with their fruit an' vegetables durin' the last few nights. Cap'n, see that each man is provided with a sack to put the taters in."

Tom repeated the order to his mate, who went into the cabin, and presently returned with an armful of bags, which he distributed among the band. The chief then lighted his lantern, and, every thing being ready for the start, led the way toward the cliff, the ascent of which was regarded by the members of the band as the worst part of the undertaking. The fissure along which the path ran, was as dark as midnight; and the faint light which the governor's lantern threw out, afforded them but little assistance in finding their way.

They had made the ascent so often, however, that they had become quite familiar with the path, and there was no danger of losing their way, or of falling over the rocks. They crossed the chasm by the rope bridge in safety, and finally reached the summit, where the governor extinguished his light, and stopped to reconnoiter. Every thing was still, and Sam was satisfied that the coast was clear, although he thought it best to give his men a few final instructions.

"There do n't seem to be nothin' wrong," said he, "but, bein' an old fox, I know it aint always best to put too much faith in appearances. We won't go straight to the field, 'cause there may be somebody on the watch, you know, an' if they see where we come from, they'll discover our hidin'-place, an' then we can bid good-by to all

hopes of ever seein' our island. If they get after us, we'll scatter out an' hide from 'em—we can easy do that in the dark—an' when they 're gone, we'll meet here. But remember, fellers, we aint comin' back without them taters."

Sam, who had by this time become well acquainted with the country about his hiding-place, once more placed himself at the head of his men, and led them down the shore for a quarter of a mile; and after passing through two or three fields, came up on the other side of the potato-patch. If the farmer was on the watch, this maneuver would lead him to believe that Sam and his band had come from the village.

The governor had no difficulty in finding the place where the farmer had left his potatoes, and after he had ordered two of the band to act as sentries, he set to work with the others to fill the bags.

For a wonder Tom labored as hard as the rest, and without once noticing how sadly he was soiling his hands and clothes. He was rendered extremely uneasy by the precautions the governor had taken to avoid capture, and he was anxious to get the work done as soon as possible. When his bag was filled, he tied it with a string he had brought with him for the purpose, and was making some desperate efforts to raise it to his shoulder, when an exclamation from one of the sentinels caused him to drop his burden as if it had been a coal of fire.

"See there, fellers!" whispered Xury.

"Look out, men!" chimed in Will Atkins. "I hear something."


Tom looked, but could see nothing. He knew there was danger near, however, and without waiting to see what quarter it was coming from, he jumped over his bag of potatoes, and drew a bee-line for the beach at a rate of speed that astonished himself. He had not made more than half a dozen steps, when an appalling yell rang out on the air, followed by the roar of a gun which sounded so loud that Tom, in his terror, thought it must have been fired close to his ear.

“Halt there, you villain!” shouted a voice close behind the flying captain of the Crusoe band.

Tom heard the order, and knew it was addressed to him, but he did not heed it. He ran faster than ever, the sound of rapidly pursuing footsteps lending him wings. But all his efforts were in vain. The footsteps grew louder, and presently Tom felt a strong hand grasp his collar. A moment afterward he found himself lying flat on his back, with a heavy weight on his breast holding him down.

CHAPTER V.

ATKINS REFUSES DUTY.

OM NEWCOMBE had his first fight that night. He resisted the active young farmer who had seized him, to the best of his ability, although, for all the good it did him, he might as well have surrendered himself a prisoner at once. But the captain of the Crusoe band had a great many reasons for not wishing to be taken prisoner. In the first place, he was pretty well known in that country, and he was afraid that the farmer might recognize in him the son of the richest man in Newport; and, even if he did not, he would know that Tom had come from the village, and he would, of course, take him back there in the morning. Then what would become of him? What would his father do? and what would Johnny Harding, and the rest of the fellows, have to say about it? Above all, what would become of the expedition, and the plan he had laid for destroying the Storm King? His capture would put an end to all the bright dreams in which he had indulged during the past two weeks, and he would once more find himself an errand-boy in his father's office, deprived of every privilege, watched more closely than ever, and teased and tor-

mented by his thoughtless acquaintances, who would never allow him a moment's peace. Tom thought of all these things, and he was surprised at himself when he found that he was fighting for his liberty with a courage and determination he had never supposed himself to possess. He kicked and thrashed about at an astonishing rate, and finding that his efforts were wholly in vain, he tried to frighten his captor by threatening him with a terrible vengeance if he did not immediately release him.

"What do you mean?" roared Tom, striving desperately to unclasp the strong fingers that were holding fast to his collar. "Let me up, or I'll give you cause to remember this night's work as long as you live. Let me up, I say."

"Well, I swan!" exclaimed the farmer, peering down into Tom's face, "I thought you made a poor fight for a man." Then hearing footsteps behind him, he looked up, and called out to some one who was approaching—"I say, Josh, they're only little brats of boys; they aint men at all. I wish I had a good apple-tree switch."

"O, now, you would n't use it on me if you had one," drawled Tom.

"Wouldn't! I'd like to know what's the reason?"

"Because you would n't dare do it. I always get even with any one who imposes on me, so you had better mind what you are about."

"I do n't want any insolence now, for I aint in just the mood to stand it. If you and your crowd are the same fellows who have been prowling around here for the last

week, you have stolen more than twenty dollars worth of garden truck. Get up here, you young robber!"

The farmer jerked his prisoner roughly to his feet, and by this time Josh came up. The arrival of re-enforcements, and the ease with which he was handled, convinced Tom that further resistance was useless, and he began to beg lustily.

"O, now, if you will let me go I'll never do it again," he pleaded.

"O yes, we'll let you go," was the encouraging reply. "We'll lock you up till morning, and then take you over to the 'squire; that's what we'll do with you. Catch hold of him, Josh."

His captor held fast to one arm, Josh took hold of the other, and Tom was marched off between them. Of course he pulled back, and tried hard to escape; but the stalwart young farmers walked him along without the least difficulty. When they reached the house, they pulled him up the steps that led to the porch, and opening a door, ushered him into the kitchen, where Tom found himself in the presence of the female portion of the farmer's family.

"Here's one of the rogues, mother," exclaimed Josh. "Sit down, and let's have a good look at you."

If Tom at that moment could have purchased his freedom by promising that he would give up his new idea, and leave the students in quiet possession of the Storm King, he would have done it, gladly. He sank into the chair Josh pointed out to him, and sat with his chin rest-

ing on his breast, and his eyes fastened on the floor, not daring to look up long enough to ascertain whether or not there was any one in the room with whom he was acquainted. He knew that half a dozen pairs of eyes were looking at him with curiosity; and he felt that if he had never before been utterly disgraced, he was now. No one spoke to him, and in a few minutes the silence became so oppressive that Tom would have welcomed a thunderstorm, or an earthquake. He twisted about in his chair, whirled his cap in his hand, and gazed steadily at a crack in the floor, until he was relieved by the noise of feet on the porch, which was followed by the entrance of the farmer, with the rest of the party who had been guarding the potato-patch. Then, for the first time, he mustered up courage enough to look around him. He noted two things—one was, that every person in the room was a stranger to him; and the other, that he had a companion in his misery, in the shape of his mate, who, unlike his superior officer, did not seem to be at all abashed at finding himself the center of so many eyes. He held his head up, and looked about him as if he felt quite at his ease.

“Well, we’ve got two of them,” said the farmer, in a tone of great satisfaction, “and I guess we’ve frightened the others so badly that they’ll let us alone in future. But how is this?” he added, glancing first at the rich man’s son, and then at the ragged, bare-footed ferry-boy. “There must have been two parties of them.”

“No, there was n’t,” said Xury. “We all belong to one crowd.”

“What’s your name?” continued the farmer, addressing himself to the captain of the Crusoe band.

“O, now, I’m Tom—”

“Avast, there!” cried Xury, so suddenly that he startled every one in the room. “His name is Muley, mister—that’s his name.”

“Muley? Muley what?”

“Muley nothin’—just Muley. That’s all the name he’s got. My name is Xury, an’ that’s all the name I’ve got.”

Tom was astonished at the impudence of his mate. He had been on the point of revealing every thing, for, now that he was a prisoner, he could not see the use of further concealment. According to his way of thinking, the expedition had been nipped in the bud, his splendid idea could not be carried out, and if the farmer had questioned him closely, he would have told him all about the Crusoe men and their hiding-place. It made no difference to Tom that he had promised to keep these things secret. He was in trouble, and all he cared for was to get out of it. Xury, however, was a very different sort of boy. He had promised never to reveal any of the secrets intrusted to his keeping, he had sealed the compact by shaking hands with his chief, and he would have endured almost any punishment before proving himself unworthy of the confidence of his fellows. Besides, he did not believe that the affairs of the band were so very desperate. He knew that the governor would never desert him, and as long as he and Tom remained on the island, there were some

hopes that those of the band who had escaped would find means to effect their release.

“Of course I know that those are not your right names,” said the farmer, at length, “but I am not particular about that, for when I take you to the village to-morrow, I can find out all about you. What did you intend to do with those potatoes?”

“Eat ’em,” answered Xury. “What else does a feller do with taters?”

“Have you eaten all the fruit and vegetables you have stolen during the last week?”

“Sartin.”

“Well, I’ll put you where you won’t steal any more to-night. Josh, you and Bill take them down cellar and leave them there with the rats.”

“That don’t scare me none,” said Xury. “I never saw no rats yet I was afraid of. What will you do with us in the mornin’, mister?”

“I intend to break up these midnight plundering expeditions, by making an example of you. I shall take you before ’Squire Thompson.”

“What do you reckon he’ll do with us?”

“He will put you in the House of Refuge for three or four years, most likely, and I think that would be a good place for you. Take them away, boys.”

Josh lighted a candle and led the way into the cellar, followed by Tom and his mate, Bill bringing up the rear. While the young farmers were examining the windows and door, to make sure that their prisoners could not escape,

Tom took a hurried survey of his quarters, which he found to be cheerless in the extreme. Three sides of the cellar were supplied with windows—narrow apertures, placed about as high as his head from the floor, and protected by stout iron bars which were set into the walls. On the fourth side was a heavy door, secured by a padlock. Tom took these things in at a glance, and quite agreed with Josh, when he said,

“Now, then, you young robbers, you are secure for the night.”

“And I would advise you to keep quiet, and not go to kicking up any fuss down here,” chimed in Bill. “If you feel like going to sleep, you can lie down on those boxes.”

Josh and Bill took their departure, and the Crusoe men were left to their meditations, and to the companionship of the rats. Tom heard them close and lock the door at the head of the stairs, and, groping his way to a box in one corner of the cellar, he sat down to think over his situation; while Xury, whistling softly to himself, began an examination of the windows. This coolness and indifference amazed Tom, who could not understand how a boy, with the prospect before him of serving out a term of years in the House of Refuge, could take matters so easily.

“O, now, quit that whistling,” drawled Tom, who found it hard work to keep back his tears.

“What fur?” demanded Xury. “There’s no use of bein’ down in the mouth, cap’n. Scoldin’ an’ frettin’ won’t help us none.”

"Did any body ever see so unlucky a boy as I am? Other fellows get along through the world without any trouble, but something is always happening to bother me. To-morrow morning I shall be taken back to the village."

"Well, I sha'n't. I aint goin' back to Newport till the governor says the word."

"But those men up stairs will make you go," drawled Tom.

"They'll have to find me first, won't they? If they think they can keep a Crusoe man in this cellar all night, they'll find out their mistake in the mornin'. They'll go to bed before long, an' then we'll see what we can do."

As Xury said this, he stretched himself out on the box beside his captain, and settling into a comfortable position, waited patiently for the farmer and his family to retire to rest. He expected to be free before morning; and, as his examination had satisfied him that he could not effect his escape without assistance, he was depending entirely upon the governor. Had he known what was going on at that moment, a short distance from the house, he might not have had so much faith in the chief's ability to release him.

Sam, Jack Spaniard, Friday, and Will Atkins, more fortunate than their fellows, succeeded in eluding their pursuers, and met on the bluff, above the cove, and sat down to rest after their long run, and to talk over the events of the night. The governor reported the capture of Tom and his mate. He was but a short distance from

them when they were overtaken, although he did not know who the unlucky ones were, until he met the band on the cliff. The Crusoe men were dismayed when they learned the extent of their loss, and some of them were strongly in favor of abandoning their enterprise. Will Atkins, especially, was very much disheartened, and urged his companions to return to the village at once.

"The jig is up now, fellers," said he, "an' I, fur one, am goin' home. Tommy an' Xury are captured, an' the first thing we know, we may be gobbled up, too. An' even if we aint, we four fellers can't rob Mr. Henry's store, an' take the Sweepstakes besides."

"Now, Atkins, who asked you fur any advice?" demanded the governor, angrily. "The expedition aint dead yet, even if two of us have fallen into the hands of the enemy. As soon as we get rested we'll go up to the house, an' if we can find out where the cap'n an' Xury are, we'll help 'em."

"I've run risks enough," returned the discontented member. "I just aint a goin' up to the house."

"What's that you say?" exclaimed the chief, astonished and enraged to hear his authority thus set at defiance.

"I say I sha'n't go up to the house," repeated Atkins, decidedly; "an' I mean it."

"Why, you would n't have us to leave them two fellers without once tryin' to help 'em, would you?"

"I do n't care what you do. You can do as you please, an' so will I."

"Now, Atkins, have you forgot them lessons I have

given you? If you don't look out I'll have to larn you a few more. You're gettin' to be mighty sassy, lately."

"You can't scare me none, governor, fur I aint alone like I used to be. I've got at least one good friend in the band. Jack, you'll stand by me."

"I will," replied Jack Spaniard, who arose from the rock where he had been sitting, and walked over to the side of the mutineer. "You see, governor," he added, "me an' Atkins have got tired of doin' all the work. You never let us have things our way at all, an' we aint a goin' to stand it no longer. If you want to help the cap'n an' Xury you can do it yourself."

The governor listened to this speech in silence. He had been expecting a demonstration of this kind from Atkins, but he was not prepared for so decided an opposition to his authority. Atkins had long shown a disposition to make trouble in the band, and during the last three days he had been more disorderly than ever. The governor had often heard him grumbling to himself, and he had made up his mind to whip all the rebellious spirit out of him at the first good opportunity. That opportunity was now presented; but Sam did not think it safe to attempt to carry out his resolve. Atkins was backed up by Jack Spaniard, and with his aid, he was likely to prove more than a match for the redoubtable bully. If Tom and his mate had been there to assist him, he could have crushed the rebellion in short order.

"Of all the mean things that have happened in the band since I got to be governor, this yere is the beat,"

said Sam, after a moment's pause. "You two fellers promised, not more 'n two weeks ago, to obey all orders, an' to stand by your friends, if they got into trouble; an' now you are goin' back on your word. There aint no honor about such fellers as you be. Friday, whose side are you on?"

"On your'n, governor; I do n't think we shall ever see our island now, but I'll stick to you as long as any body does."

"All right!" exclaimed the chief, immensely relieved. "Jack Spaniard, you're always been a good, law-abidin' man, an' if you'll come away from that feller, I won't say nothin' to you; I'll let you off easy. An' you, Atkins, you've been spilin' fur a good drubbin', an' the only way you can escape it, is by sayin' that you'll tend to your duty, an' obey orders like a man had oughter do. Let's hear from you."

"I won't do duty," replied Atkins, sullenly.

Jack Spaniard hesitated a moment before he answered. He knew that those who had dared to oppose the governor, had thus far been brought to grief, and he was almost inclined to take him at his word, and leave Atkins to fight his own battles. But he had been highly incensed by the new rules Tom had introduced into the society, and, believing that he was as good as any body, he did not like to be obliged to act the part of a servant. More than that, the events of the night had dampened his ardor. He began to see that there were a multitude of risks to be run, and a good many obstacles to be overcome, before they could

begin their intended cruise, and he thought it policy to abandon the enterprise before he found himself in serious trouble.

“Me an’ Atkins will stick together,” said he.

“Very good,” replied the chief; “an’ you an’ Atkins may make up your minds to sup sorrow with the same spoon. I am governor of this band, an’ I’ll come out at the top of the heap yet ; now you mark what I say. What are you goin’ to do?”

“We ’re goin’ into the cove after our share of the outfit,” replied Will Atkins. “When we get it, we ’re goin’ back to the village. Come on, Jack ; we’ve wasted time enough in talkin’.”

The two mutineers began to descend the cliff, keeping their eyes fastened on the governor, and holding themselves in readiness to resist any attack ; but, to Friday’s surprise, Sam made no attempt to detain them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOVERNOR'S STRATEGY.



WHEN Atkins and his companion had disappeared down the path that led to the cove, Sam placed his hands behind his back, and began pacing thoughtfully to and fro, while Friday, dismayed and perplexed by this unlooked-for event, and utterly unable to discover any way out of the difficulty, stretched himself on the ground and waited for the chief to speak.

The affairs of the band were certainly beginning to look desperate. With two of his best men in the hands of the enemy, two more setting his authority at defiance, and with only one companion upon whom to depend, what could the governor do? A less determined and persevering boy would have given up in despair; but Sam, who, since the idea of leading Crusoe life had been suggested to him, had thought and dreamed about nothing else, was not easily discouraged. He was resolved that he would not abandon the course of action which had been determined on by the band a few days before; but he could not carry it out unless assisted by the two mutineers, and, as they could not be coaxed to listen to

reason, they must be compelled. He would punish them for their disobedience, and show them, once for all, that his authority could not be resisted with impunity.

"Friday," said he, "I'll never forget you fur this night's work. You've got the best name of any of us, an' so has Will Atkins. The Friday the book tells about stuck to Crusoe like a brother, an' Atkins done nothin' but study up meanness an' mischief. Our Atkins is doin' the same thing; but he won't make nothin', no more'n the one he's named after did. He'll be glad enough to come to terms by mornin', now you see if he aint. We don't intend to let him an' Jack Spaniard go back to the village to blow on us, an' the first thing to be done is to fasten 'em in the cove, so that we can find 'em when we want 'em."

"How are we goin' to do it?" asked Friday.

"We'll take down the bridge," replied the governor, with a chuckle, "an' then let's see 'em get out. They don't know the channels across the shoals, so, of course, they won't dare to try to sail out; an' after the bridge is gone, there's only one way they can get across the gully. I'll larn 'em how to get up a mutiny."

The chief, after lighting his lantern, led the way down the path, and presently came to a halt on the brink of the chasm. Atkins and Jack Spaniard having crossed it a few minutes before, the rope was on the opposite side, and Friday could see no way to obtain possession of it.

"I'll tell you how I am goin' to manage it," said the

governor, in answer to an inquiring glance from his companion. "I told you there is one way to get across, even after the bridge is gone, did n't I? Well, do you see this tree here? It leans over the gully, an' one of its limbs runs into the tree on the opposite side that the rope is made fast to."

Friday elevated his lantern and gazed up into the darkness, but could see nothing more than a dense canopy of leaves and branches hanging over the chasm. He shuddered at the thought of attempting to cross on so frail a bridge. "I would n't go up there fur nothin'," said he, "an' I would n't advise you to try it, either."

"Well, it aint the pleasantest job in the world," replied Sam, carelessly, "but I know just where the limb is, an' I am sure I can cross on it. Howsomever, I am free to confess, that if I could think of any other way to get the rope, I would n't try it."

"If you can cross that way, what's the reason that Will Atkins an' Jack Spaniard can't do it too?" inquired Friday.

"'Cause, after I get over an' come back, nobody will ever cross the gully that way again. We'll pull the limb down. Now, you hold the lantern up high an' give me all the light you can. It's mighty dark up there, an' I don't care about missin' my hold an' fallin' down on them rocks.

The chief scrambled up the cliff to the tree of which he had spoken, and began to ascend it. He worked his way up with the agility of a squirrel, and presently dis-

appeared from the view of his man below. When he came in sight again, he was on the limb that stretched out over the chasm, and which was bending and cracking beneath his weight in a manner that made Friday extremely nervous. But Sam resolutely held on his way, and finally swung himself safely into the branches of the tree on the opposite side. After securing the rope, he threw one end of it to Friday, made the other fast to the limb on which he had crossed the gully, and a few moments afterward he slid down the bluff and seated himself on the ground beside his companion, to recover his breath.

"I'll show them fellers what they are about," said he, wiping the big drops of perspiration from his face. "I'll larn 'em how to get up a mutiny, after promisin', honor bright, to obey all orders. Now, if we've got muscle enough to break that limb, we are all right."

"Could n't Atkins make a bridge, by cuttin' down one of them trees?" asked Friday.

"No, he could n't. The trees on that side won't fall across the gully, 'cause they all lean the other way. Ketch hold, now, an' pull fur life."

The governor and his man grasped the ropes, and, exerting all their strength, suddenly found themselves lying flat in the path. The limb, unable to resist the strain brought to bear upon it, parted with a noise like the report of a cannon, and fell crashing into the gully, carrying with it a perfect avalanche of rocks and earth which it detached from the opposite bluff. That bridge

was destroyed, and there was no way of escape for the mutineers.

The next thing was to untie the rope from the limb which lay at the bottom of the chasm. The only way it could be accomplished was for one of the Crusoe men to go down into the gully, and this Friday volunteered to do. Accordingly, the end of the rope which they held in their hands was made fast to the nearest tree, and Friday, after tying the lantern around his waist, descended out of sight. In a few minutes he re-appeared, climbing the rope, which was pulled up and hidden away in the bushes.

"That job is done," said the chief, with a long breath of relief, "an' them two fellers are fastened up as tight as if they were in jail. I'll larn 'em how to get up a mutiny!"

"But, governor, how will we get across?" asked Friday.

"Easy enough. One of us will climb up an' make one end of the rope fast to this tree that leans over the gully, an' we'll swing back an' forth just as we did before. The next job we've got to do aint so easy. It's one I do n't like; but, if I was a prisoner, I'd think it mighty mean of my men if they deserted me, an' I m goin' to do to the cap'n an' Xury just as I'd like to be done by."

The governor and his man ascended to the top of the bluff, and bent their steps toward the farm-house, which was now shrouded in total darkness. The inmates had

all retired to rest, happy in the belief that those of the band who had escaped had made the best of their way to the village, and that their potato-patch was safe for the rest of the night. But the Crusoe men, apprehensive that the farmer might still be on the watch, were at first very cautious in their movements. They walked around the house several times without seeing any signs of the enemy, and, growing bolder by degrees, began to search the out-buildings, hoping that Tom and his mate might be confined in one of them. But their efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of their unlucky companions were unrewarded, and, after half an hour's fruitless search, even Sam began to get discouraged.

"Mebbe they have taken them to the village already," he whispered, leaning disconsolately against a corner of the house. "If they have, the expedition is up stump, easy enough, an' we can bid good-by to all hopes of ever seein' our island. What's that? Did n't you hear some one call?"

"I thought I did," replied Friday, "but I was n't sartin'."

"I say, governor, are you deaf? Look this way. Here we are."

The words seemed to come from the ground at their very feet; and the governor and Friday heard them plainly enough this time. Their attention was drawn to one of the cellar windows, and there they saw the two prisoners, with their faces pressed close against the bars.

"What are you doin' down there?" asked Friday, in an excited whisper. "Are you locked up?"

"I reckon," replied Xury. "We wouldn't stay here if we was n't, would we?"

"O, now, yes, we're locked up," drawled Tom, who, delighted as he was at seeing the chief, could not forget his lazy way of talking. "But you are going to let us out, are you not?"

"Sartin. That's what we come here fur, an' we'll do it if we have to burn the shantee."

"You need n't go to all that trouble, governor," said Xury. "Do you see that door around there on the other side of the house?"

Sam walked around the building, and when he came back, he said that he had seen the door.

"Well," continued Xury, "all you have got to do is to raise a rumpus out there, an' awaken the people up stairs."

"Humph!" sneered Sam.

"Hold on till I get through, governor. Of course, when they hear you, they'll come out an' foller you; an' when the men have all left the house, one of you can slip back an' cut down that door an' let us out. Here's an ax to do it with," he added, passing the implement through the window to the chief.

"That's a good idea, after all," said Sam.

"Friday, you take the ax, an' I'll do the runnin'. I'll lead the fellers toward the beach, an' you stay here an' watch your chance to beat down that door. How many folks are there in the house, Xury?"

"Ten altogether—six men an' boys, an' four women," was the reply. "I know, 'cause I counted 'em."

"Of course, the women will stay in the house," continued the governor, addressing himself to Friday; "an' when they hear you cuttin' at the door, they'll be sartin to come out an' holler at you; but that need n't scare you. Now, then, how shall we awaken the folks?"

The chief had scarcely propounded this question, when 't was answered in way he had not expected. A window above him was thrown open, a head appeared, and a voice called out, "Well, I swan!"

The governor and his man did not wait to hear what the farmer had to say next. The enemy were aroused, and an opportunity was given them to try the plan Xury had suggested. Friday, who well understood the part he was expected to perform, sprang around the house out of sight; while Sam started across the field toward the beach.

"Stop there, you young rascal!" shouted the man in the window. "Josh! Bill! Wake up, an' get out there! Those robbers have come back again!"

The window came down with a crush, and Friday, who had by this time concealed himself behind a corn-crib, a short distance from the cellar door, heard a great commotion in the house. Lights flashed from the windows, men and women run about calling to each other, and presently the door opened and Josh and Bill appeared.

"There they are!" exclaimed one, discovering Sam, who was by this time well on his way across the field;

“hurry up there, boys. He’s got a long start, and is running like a scared turkey.”

These last words were addressed to the men in the house, who came out one after another, some without their hats, some bare-footed, others pulling on their coats as they ran, and all following after Bill and Josh, who were flying across the field in hot pursuit of the governor. Friday, from his hiding-place, counted them as they sprang down the steps, and when the sixth man had left the house, and was out of sight in the darkness, he straightened up and prepared for action. He listened a moment to the shrill, excited voices of the women, and clutching his ax with a firm hold, he came out from behind the corn-crib and ran toward the house. A few rapid steps brought him to the cellar door, which he attacked furiously. The first blow he struck echoed through the cellar like a peal of thunder, alarming the women up stairs; and the second brought them to the porch, where they stood watching Friday’s operations in speechless amazement. The Crusoe man, intent on releasing his companions, gave no heed to what was going on around him, until a chorus of angry screams arose from the porch; then he started and trembled a little, but was not frightened from his work. He redoubled his efforts, the door began to bend and groan, and was finally forced from its fastenings, and Tom and his mate sprang out. Then the screams arose in greater volume than before, and reached the ears of the farmer and his men, who abandoned the pursuit of the governor, and returned to the house with all possible

speed. But they were too late; for, long before they arrived, Tom and his companions had made good their escape. The shattered door, and the ax lying where Friday had thrown it after effecting the release of the prisoners, were all that were left to remind the farmer of the Crusoe band.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GOVERNOR STORMS THE REBELS.

HIP! hip! hurrah!" exclaimed Tom Newcombe, in an excited whisper, "I am free once more, and I'll have a chance yet to destroy that yacht. If the crew of the Storm King only knew what is going to happen, they would be sorry that I escaped."

"You can thank me for it," said Sam.

"An' me, too," chimed in Xury. "I was the one who found the ax in the cellar an' studied up the plan the governor carried out."

"I guess I had oughter have a little of the praise," observed Friday. "It aint every feller who would have stood there an' cut down that door with all them women hollerin' at him."

"We've all done well," said the chief, "all except Will Atkins an' Jack Spaniard, an' they are cowards an' traitors."

The Crusoe men were gathered on the bluff at the head of the path, sweating and panting, and congratulating themselves on the success of their undertaking. The governor, especially, regarded it as something well worth

boasting of, and he was in excellent spirits. His society, although it had thus far failed to accomplish the object for which it was organized, had already made for itself a brilliant record. It had performed an exploit in the village that would be talked about and wondered at as long as the military academy should stand, or the present generation of boys exist. Its members, acting under his instructions, had overpowered three times their number of students, captured their vessel, and would certainly have got out to sea with her but for the treachery of Tom Newcombe. But, great as was this achievement, it sank into insignificance when compared with the one they had just performed. The chief had succeeded in releasing the prisoners confined in the farm-house, and that, too, with the assistance of only one companion, and in the face of a mutiny that had, at one time, bid fair to break up the Crusoe band. The governor assumed the lion's share of the honor of this exploit, and, as he thought, with good reason, for he had run all the risk. He had led the men away from the house, and given Friday a chance to cut down the door. His affairs had looked desperate a little while before, but by his skill and determination he had succeeded in bringing some order out of the confusion, and the only thing that remained to be done was to punish the traitors, which was a matter he could attend to at his leisure. He believed that the rebellion had already died out, and that, when he descended into the cove, he would find the mutineers ready to accept any terms he might see fit to offer them.

“What’s become of Atkins and Jack Spaniard?” asked Tom, who seemed, for the first time, to notice the absence of those worthies. “I don’t see them anywhere.”

“Did n’t I say that they were traitors and cowards?” replied the governor. “Listen, now, an’ I’ll tell you all about it.”

Sam then proceeded to give Tom and his mate a glowing description of the mutiny, and, during the course of his narration, he artfully aroused their indignation by dwelling upon the meanness and cowardice displayed by Atkins and Jack Spaniard in deserting the band at the very time their services were most needed, to assist in releasing the prisoners, and wound up by telling how he had secured possession of the rope and pulled down the limb, thus cutting off all chance of escape for the mutineers. Tom and Xury were highly enraged, especially the former, who denounced the faithless Crusoe men in the strongest terms. He also took occasion to impress his auditors with the fact that the society could not long exist without the hearty co-operation of all its members, and that no punishment was too severe for one who could refuse to hasten to the relief of a comrade in distress. Tom made a long speech on this subject, emphasizing his remarks by shaking his fists in the air, and stamping his feet on the ground, and all the while forgetting that, when questioned by the farmer in the house, he had been on the point of committing the very sin he was so loudly condemning. Xury remembered the circumstance, but he did not think it worth speaking about.

"I 'spose that, bein' an officer, I have a right to say something, haint I?" asked the mate, when Tom had finished his speech. "Well, I just want to tell you how I think them two fellers can be made to listen to reason. That farmer said he was goin' to take us over to the village in the mornin' an' have us put in—what kind of a house did he say that was, cap'n?"

"The House of Refuge," replied Tom.

"Yes, that's it. He said he was goin' to put us in that house fur three or four years, an' that it would be the best place in the world fur us. Now, can't we scare them two mutineers by tellin' 'em that if they don't do what's right we will give 'em up to the farmer, an' let him take 'em before the 'squire? That will bring 'em to terms, if any thing will."

"But how can we give 'em up to the farmer without bein' ketched ourselves?" asked Sam.

"We can tie 'em hand an' foot, an' take 'em up to the house some night an' leave 'em on the porch, can't we? But, of course, we do n't want to do it, governor, 'cause we can't get along without 'em. We only want to make them behave themselves like men had oughter do."

"Mebbe it would be well to have a hold of some kind on 'em," said the chief, after thinking the matter over, "'cause they're spunky fellers, an' can't be easy scared. But, after all, I aint afraid to say that they've come to their senses before this time. Let's go down and see 'em."

The governor once more lighted his lantern, and, after shouldering a bag of potatoes, which he had found as he

came through the field, and which had doubtless been overlooked by the farmer, he led the way down the cliff to the chasm, where he stopped, astonished at the scene presented to his view. It was evident, from the appearance of things, that Atkins and Jack Spainard were very far from being the humble, penitent fellows the governor had hoped to find them. They had discovered the trick that had been played upon them, and, being resolved that, if they could not get out of the cove, the governor should not come into it, they had fortified their side of the chasm by erecting a breastwork of bushes across the path. A fire burned brightly behind the breastwork, and beside it stood the two mutineers, engaged in stripping the branches from a couple of small trees they had just cut down. They ceased their work when they heard the chief and his men approaching, and, taking up their positions behind the breastwork, looked across the chasm at them as if waiting to hear what they had to say.

“Well, if there aint the cap’n an’ Xury!” exclaimed Jack Spaniard, who seemed greatly astonished to see the governor thus re-enforced. “How did you get away?”

“Me an’ Friday helped ’em, no thanks to you two cowards an’ traitors,” replied Sam, angrily. “What’s the meanin’ of all this yere?” he added, surveying the warlike preparations with some uneasiness.

“It means just this, governor,” replied Atkins; “we know what you are up to, an’ we aint goin’ to stand no more nonsense. We’re goin to fight it out.”

"Then you haven't made up your minds to do duty, an' behave yourselves?"

"No, we haint. We've got our share of the outfit, an' we're goin' home. We aint goin' to be servants fur nobody."

"I reckon you won't go home in a hurry. We have got you fastened up in there, an' we can starve you to death if we feel like it."

"You 'll have a nice time doin' it, seein' that all the grub is on our side of the gully," said Jack Spaniard, with a laugh. "But you haint got us fastened up so tight as you think fur. Do you see these poles?" he added, lifting the sapling upon which he had been at work when the governor came in sight; "well, when we get the branches all off, we're goin' to make a bridge with 'em."

"Not much you aint; we've got something to say about that. Now, I'll give you five minutes to make up your minds whether or not you will come back into the band, an' behave yourselves like men had oughter do, or be delivered up to that farmer, who will take you before 'Squire Thompson, an' have you put in jail fur robbin' his potato-patch. Let's hear from you. I am listenin' with all the ears I've got."

The actions of the two mutineers afforded abundant proof that Xury knew their weak side when he suggested that the chief should threaten them with the law. The name of 'Squire Thompson was a terror to evil-doers about the village, and Atkins and his companion were very much

afraid of him. They looked at each other, doubtfully, and held a council of war; while Sam employed the interval in consulting with his men, and trying to decide upon some plan to capture the mutineers, should the result of their consultation be unfavorable to him.

"We aint comin' back into the band," said Atkins, at length. "an' we aint goin' to the village as prisoners, neither. We're goin' to fight it out."

"All right," replied the governor, indifferently. "If you remember what the book says, you know that Will Atkins never made any thing by kicking up a fuss on Robinson's island, an' you will come out of the little end of the horn, just as he did. Look out for yourselves over there, now. Come with me, fellers."

The governor and his men moved up the cliffs, until a bend in the path concealed them from the view of the mutineers. They were gone so long that Atkins and his companion began to wonder what had become of them; but at the end of a quarter of an hour, Sam had completed his arrangements for an attack upon the stronghold of the rebels, and presently Friday appeared with a rope tied around his waist, and began to ascend a tree that leaned over the chasm.

"Hold on, there!" exclaimed Atkins, suddenly starting up from behind the breastwork. "You think you're smart, an' mebbe you are; but you can't put that bridge up under our very eyes. We've got a whole pile of rocks here, an' if you do n't come down out of that tree to onct, we'll fire on you. Jerusalem! What's that?"

Just as the mutineer had finished threatening Friday, something whizzed through the air in unpleasant proximity to his head. It was a potato, thrown by the textrous hand of the chief, and was followed by more missiles of the same sort, which whistled over the breastwork in a continuous shower. Atkins dropped like a flash, and picking up a stone in each hand, cautiously raised his head to look for the enemy; but the instant the crown of his hat appeared above the breastwork, it became a mark for the watchful Crusoe men, who sent the potatoes about his ears so thick and fast that Atkins was glad to drop down again.

“Keep your eyes open, men,” cried the governor, “an’ fire at the first one who dares to show himself. Atkins, when you get ready to surrender, just sing out. That’s all you’ve got to do.”

The mutineers were as fairly captured as if they had been bound hand and foot. They could neither retreat nor defend themselves. A cracking and rustling among the branches above, told them that Friday was engaged in putting up the bridge; and they knew that unless they could dislodge him they would soon be at closer quarters with the enemy.

“I’ll give you just a half a minute to get down out of that tree,” exclaimed Atkins.

“We don’t want to hurt you, but we aint goin’ to let you put up that bridge,” said Jack Spaniard.

The rustling among the branches ceased for a moment, and Friday peeped through the leaves at the mutineers, both of whom were lying flat on their backs behind the

breastwork. Seeing at a glance that he had nothing to fear from them, he went on with his work.

Atkins and his companion, finding that threats were unavailing, began to bestir themselves. They made loop-holes through the breastwork, but could not see their besiegers. Sam had posted his men on the cliff, outside the circle of light made by the fire, and consequently they were invisible to the mutineers ; while the latter had built their fort in the full glare of the fire-light, and every move they made could be distinctly seen. They could not even use the loop-holes after they made them ; for the governor and his men were always on the watch, and threw their potatoes so swiftly and accurately that the rebels were obliged to keep themselves well sheltered. Friday was still busy among the branches of the tree, and, when he had finished the work of putting up the bridge, he also opened fire. His shot was followed by another shower from the men posted on the cliff, who expended their ammunition without stint, sending the potatoes over and around the breastwork so thickly, that Atkins and his companion were once more obliged to throw themselves flat upon the ground to escape being hit. Suddenly the firing ceased, and a dark object came flying over the chasm into the fort. It was the governor, who, the moment he landed on his feet, began operations by pouncing upon the mutineers, throwing an arm around the neck of each, and holding them fast. How much he could have done toward conquering them it is hard to tell. The rebels were both determined fellows, and when they had sufficiently recov-

ered from their astonishment to see that Sam was alone, they began to struggle furiously. But help for the governor was near. When he let go the rope it swung back into the hands of Xury, who was waiting to receive it, and he, too, came sailing over the breastwork, and dropped down upon Jack Spaniard, who had succeeded in freeing himself from the chief's grasp, and was rising to his feet. Tom Newcombe followed close behind, and Friday brought up the rear. They came, one after the other, as rapidly as the rope could swing back and forth; and the rebels, finding themselves overpowered, began to beg for quarter.

"Avast, there!" cried Sam, and Friday's uplifted hand sank harmlessly to his side, instead of falling upon the unprotected face of the chief mutineer. "Let 'em up. I'll answer for their good behavior now."

The rebels were quite as much astonished at the governor's clemency as were the other members of the band. They arose slowly to their feet, and gazed about them with a bewildered, suspicious air, as if half expecting to receive a kick or blow from some unlooked-for source. Atkins, in particular, scarcely knew what to make of it. He surveyed the chief from head to foot, as if he were hardly prepared to believe that he was the same old ruler of the Crusoe band who had taught him so many lessons of obedience at their cave in the village. Sam stood for a few moments enjoying his surprise, when he suddenly became aware that Atkins's eyes were not fastened upon him, but that they appeared to be looking through him, at something on the other side of the chasm.

A feeling of uneasiness crept over the chief, for he saw that the expression on the face of his man was changing from astonishment to alarm. "What is it?" he whispered, not daring to look around.

Atkins, in reply, slowly raised his hand until it was on a level with his shoulder, and pointed toward the bluff across the gully; and, at the same instant, the governor nearly jumped from the ground when he heard an ejaculation that had become familiar to him that night—

"Well, I swan!"

He faced about quickly, and caught just one glimpse of a dark figure which was gliding swiftly and noiselessly up the path. All the crusoe men saw it, and they were so astonished and dismayed by the unlooked-for interruption, that, for a moment, none of them could speak.

Tom Newcombe was the first to recover the use of his tongue. "O, now, we're caught, easy enough," he drawled. "This kills the expedition, and we might as well surrender ourselves prisoners at once. I always was the unluckiest boy in the whole world."

Just at that moment Sam Barton was of the same opinion regarding himself. His exultation at the victory he had gained over the rebels, gave way to a feeling of intense excitement and alarm. His under jaw dropped down, and he stood looking across the chasm toward the place where the spy had disappeared, as if he had suddenly been deprived of the power of action. It was no wonder that he was alarmed. His hiding-place had been discovered, and, of course, that ruined every thing.

"Jerusalem!" ejaculated Will Atkins, who, now that his mutiny had been brought to an end, was quite willing to swear allegiance to the Crusoe band once more. "Did you see him, governor?"

"Well, I swan!" exclaimed Sam, unconsciously repeating the words the spy had used. "Did I see him? Have I got a pair of eyes? We're in a fix now, fellers. That ar' chap is another Bobby Jennings, an' if he gets away he'll ruin us, sure an' sartin." As the governor uttered these words they seemed to suggest a plan of operations. "Foller him up, lads," he exclaimed, excitedly. "Foller him up!"


"O, now, how do we know that he is alone?" drawled Tom. "Perhaps the farmer and all his men are with him."

"We've got to run that risk," replied Xury, seizing the rope and jumping over the chasm. "We must ketch him if we can. It's our only chance."

Tom could not help acknowledging this, and, although he trembled a little when he thought of the danger he might be about to run into, he crossed the gully with the others, and followed close behind the governor as he dashed up the path in pursuit of the spy.

CHAPTER VIII.

CROSSING THE SHOALS.

 NOW, I've seen some stirring times in my life, but I never before had so many adventures crowded into the short space of one night!" panted the captain of the Crusoe band, as he followed the chief up the cliff. "I would give something handsome to know what is going to happen next!"

Tom had indeed enjoyed his full share of excitement since the sun went down. He had been captured by the Philistines, and confined as a prisoner of war in the farmhouse; he had taken an active part in storming the stronghold of the rebels; and was now toiling up the path in pursuit of a spy, who, if he escaped, would return with a force sufficient to surround and capture the Crusoe band. Nothing in his experience with the Night-hawks could equal the adventures of this night, and they were by no means ended. He would have been astonished had he known that they were only just begun. If the events that were to happen during the next few hours could have been revealed to him, he might have been tempted to desert the band and return to his home. The derision

of his acquaintances, and the extra office duties that would, no doubt, have been imposed upon him, would have been light punishment indeed, compared with what was in store for him. The race up the cliff was a short one. The Crusoe men had a decided advantage of the fugitive, for they had traveled the path so often that they had but little difficulty in following it ; while the spy's progress was delayed by the rocks and bushes, over which he stumbled in the dark, making noise sufficient to guide his enemies in the pursuit.

"He aint fur off," whispered the governor, "an' he's alone, too. If there were any fellers with him we could hear 'em. Hold on, up there! You can't escape, an' you'll fare a heap better if you surrender to onct."

But the spy was evidently not one of the kind who surrender upon demand. He held steadily on his way, although his pursuers gained at every step, and when they had accomplished about half the distance to the summit, Sam was near enough to the fugitive to seize him by the collar.

"Surrender now—no foolin'!" said he, in a very savage tone of voice. "We'll treat you like a man if you behave yourself."

Somewhat to the governor's surprise, the spy offered no resistance. The darkness was so intense that he could not see how many enemies he had to deal with, but, knowing that they were much too strong for him, he suffered himself to be led down the path to the chasm. The fire kindled by the mutineers was still burning brightly and

by the aid of its light, the Crusoe men were enabled to take a good survey of their prisoner. He was a sturdy, barefooted boy, about Tom's age, and might have been a second Xury, so self-possessed was he. He looked at his captors, one after the other, as if taking their exact measure, and finally said:

"Well, I swan! If I had known that you were boys like myself, I would n't have been caught so easy. I'd like to know what you are doing down here?"

"Feller's, his name is Jed," said Xury, by way of introduction. "I know, 'cause I saw him up to the house, an' I heard his dad call him Jed. He looked at me an' the cap'n mighty sassy then, but now he'll find out how it seems to be a prisoner."

"Is there any one with you?" asked Tom.

"No, I came alone," replied Jed.

"How did you find us?"

"I saw the light of that fire shining above the cliff."

Upon hearing this the governor glared so savagely at the mutineers, that those worthies, fearing that he was about to abandon his pacific policy, retreated a step or two and began to look around for something with which to defend themselves. But the wound caused by the mutiny was nearly healed, and Sam, after a moment's reflection, concluded that he could not afford to reopen it, or to stir up any new quarrels. He believed that he would soon have need of the services of all his men, and it was necessary to keep on good terms with them.

"I have lived on this farm all my life," continued Jed,

"but I never knew before that there was a way to get down here."

"Well, there is," said Xury;" an' some day, when you are a free man, you can go down by this path to the rocks below, an' find the best fishing grounds in Newport harbor."

"Who's talkin' about fishin'?" interrupted the governor, whose brain was busy with more important matters. "What do you reckon your ole man will do with us if he ketches us?"

"If!" repeated Jed. "He is bound to ketch you. When I go home I shall bring him right down here."

"But mebbe you won't go back to the house in a hurry," said Sam.

"Well, then, father will know that something has happened to me, and he will begin searching the island. He'll find you, you may depend upon that; and, when he gets hold of you, he'll put you where you won't rob any more potato-patches. Where do you fellows belong, anyhow? What are you staying here for, and what are you going to do with me?"

The governor made no reply to these questions, for something his prisoner had said excited a serious train of reflections in his mind. The events of the last five minutes had sadly interfered with his arrangements. His harboring place was broken up now, and by daylight the island would be too hot to hold him. What should he do? That was a question he could not answer at once; he must have time to think it over. At a sign from him

Atkins and Friday crossed the chasm ; but, when he ordered Jed to follow, he declined to move.

“ What shall I go over there for ? ” he demanded.

“ ‘Cause it’s our orders. We’re goin’ to keep you here for awhile.”

“ Well, I swan to man ! ” said Jed.

“ If we should let you go, you might tell on us, you know. Come, ketch hold of the rope an’ go on.”

“ Well—no ; I guess I won’t go of my own free will. If you want me over there you must put me over.”

“ All right,” replied the governor, pulling out his knife and cutting off a piece of the rope ; “ we’re just the fellers that can do it. Come back here, men. Now,” he added, when Atkins and Friday had recrossed the chasm, “ all hands pitch in, and tie him, hand and foot.”

The Crusoe men knew, by Jed’s looks, that he was all muscle and pluck, and consequently they were not surprised at his stubborn resistance. They “ pitched in ” with alacrity, and one of them did something that Sam had not calculated on—he “ pitched out ” again, directly. It was Tom Newcombe, who, the instant he laid his hand on the prisoner’s collar, was seized around the body and thrown heavily on the rocks. He gathered himself up as quickly as possible, drew down the corners of his mouth, rubbed his elbow, and stood off at a safe distance and looked on. Will Atkins received a back-handed blow over his eye that caused him to see a million of stars ; but, as he had more pluck than Tom, and was anxious to restore himself to the governor’s favor, he merely stopped long enough to say,

"Jerusalem!" and then "pitched in" harder than ever. Of course, Jed was conquered; but it was only after a protracted struggle.

"Now we're all right," exclaimed the governor, assisting his prisoner to his feet and pulling him toward the edge of the chasm, "an' I reckon you'll go over, won't you? Atkins, you and Friday go across ag'in an' stand by to ketch him. Xury," he continued, when this order has been obeyed, "pass the rope under his arms an' make it fast, while me an' the cap'n hold him."

Jed, having by this time been fully convinced that it was idle to resist, submitted to the Crusoe men, at the same time reminding them that the chasm was deep, and that a fall upon the rocks below might break his neck, and give Sam and his band something more serious than the robbing of a potato-patch to answer for.

"Now, don't you be any ways oneasy," replied the governor. "You did n't harm my men while you had 'em pris'ners, an' I won't harm you, neither. Are you fellers over there all ready? If you are, look out fur him, fur here he comes."

Jed's position just then was not a comfortable one. His hands were confined behind his back, his feet bound close together, and he was to be swung over the chasm as if he had been a sack of corn. The governor seized him by the hips, pulled him back until his feet were clear of the ground, and then let him go. He swung safely over the gully, and when he came within reach of Atkins and Friday, he was caught and held by one,

while the other untied the rope. The Crusoe men followed after, and when all had crossed, the governor ordered Atkins and Jack Spaniard to put out the fire. As soon as this had been done, and the mutineers had collected the articles of the outfit, which they had intended to take back to the village with them, the governor lighted his lantern, and turned to the prisoner.

"Have you found out, by this time, that we can do just what we please with you?" he asked. "Now, will you walk down to the cove, or shall we tote you?"

"Well, I guess I'd best walk, had n't I?" replied Jed, who was sharp enough to know that, however carefully he might be handled, he could not escape some severe bruises while being carried down that steep path. "Yes, I reckon I'll walk."

"All right; Xury, untie his feet, and you an' the cap'n look out fur him, an' see that he do n't fall down."

The governor led the way to the cove, and, after the prisoner had been laid on one of the beds in the cabin, and the two mutineers had restored the outfit to its place, the Crusoe men stretched themselves on the grass near the spring, to hold a council of war. By the aid of the lantern, which he had placed on the little knoll that served for the table, the chief scanned the faces of his companions, and saw that on every one of them were reflected the thoughts that had been busy in his own brain. All his men believed as he did—that a crisis in their affairs was at hand. Tom Newcombe, as usual, was the first to speak.

"O, now, what's to be done?" he drawled. "If we keep this prisoner here his father will begin searching for him in the morning, and he will be certain to discover our hiding-place sooner or later. If we release him, he will go home and return immediately with help enough to capture us all."

"Well, that might not be as easy a job as you think fur," replied the governor. "If we are sharp, we can hold our own here against a dozen fellers, for a day or two. But we do n't want to fight. We want to get away from here as easy as we can. Atkins, what have you and Jack Spaniard got to say about it? Are you waitin' fur a chance to get up another mutiny?"

"No, governor, I aint," replied the chief conspirator, quickly. "I'll never do it again."

"Nor me, neither," said Jack Spaniard. "There's my hand on it—honor bright."

"Of course I can't put as much faith in you as I did before," said the chief, as he shook hands with the mutineers. "After a man has fooled me once, I never like to trust him any more till he proves that he is all right."

"Just tell us what you want done, governor," said Atkins, "an' if we do n't do it you need n't never believe us ag'in."

"Well, mebbe I shall have a chance to try you before mornin'. You've got to stick to us now or be taken before the 'squire. If you should go back to Newport an' begin ferryin' ag'in, that farmer's boy would come

across you some time, and then where would you be? We can't none of us go back to the village, an' we can't live here, neither, so we must start for our island at once—this very night. If we stay till mornin' that farmer an' all his men will be down here lookin' fur Jed; and if they once discover us, an' get us surrounded, we're done fur. Cap'n, stand by to get that yawl under way, an' the rest of us turn to an' pack the outfit."

The Crusoe men obeyed these orders without making any comments upon them. They had often discussed this very move. They had talked about it bravely enough, and had even expressed their impatience at being obliged to remain so long inactive, but, now that the time had arrived, and they had heard the order given to break up their camp, more than half of them felt like backing out. They knew that they were about to encounter the real dangers that lay in their path, and which they had thus far viewed at a distance. The Sweepstakes must be captured, the provisions secured, and they must assist Tom in destroying the yacht. It was no wonder that they looked into the future with doubtful eyes. Improbable as it may seem, the governor had the least to say of any one in the band, while Tom was as jolly as a boy could be. He obeyed his orders promptly, shoving the yawl from the beach, and mooring her broadside to the bluff bank in front of the cabin, so that the cargo could be easily stowed away. After that he hoisted the sail, and was ready to lend assistance in packing up the outfit. He stepped gayly about his work, joking and laughing the

while with his companions, who were astonished to see him in such spirits.

"Cap'n," said the governor, who had for some time remained silent, "don't you think that ar' little plan of your'n is just the least bit risky? If I was you, I'd let them 'cademy swells keep their vessel an' welcome."

"You would!" exclaimed Tom. "Well, *I* won't, now I tell you! What! Give up the very thing I have lived for, and thought of, and dreamed about for so long? No, sir! That yacht has been the means of making me a vagabond, an outcast from home, and a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and she shall not stay above water any longer. If I can't enjoy her, nobody shall. I'll destroy the last vestige of her—I'll blot the academy navy out of existence. I'll abolish the offices of captain, lieutenant, master, and midshipman, and turn Harry Green and his crowd of spooneys back to the ranks, with as much ease as the principal could do it himself. I'll start a bon-fire in the harbor that will serve us as a light-house, and show us our way out to sea. Those fellows have teased and tormented me for months about that vessel, and now I am going to have my revenge. You will not go back on me, governor?"

The Crusoe men had paused in their work to listen to Tom. His fiery words and determined air, not only served to convince them that he was thoroughly in earnest, and that he was resolved to carry out his plans if within the bounds of possibility, but they also had the effect of reviving the drooping spirits of the band. He spoke

with such calmness and confidence, and seemed to be so utterly regardless of all the obstacles in his path, and so certain of success, that they could not help feeling encouraged.

“No, sir, I’ll not go back on you,” said the chief, emphatically; and no one who heard him speak imagined that he had been racking his brain in the hope of hitting upon some excuse for declining to assist Tom in destroying the yacht. “I said I’d stand by you, did n’t I? I am a fellow who never breaks his promise.”

In a few minutes the outfit had been packed away in boxes, provided for the purpose, and the Crusoe men began the work of stowing it in the yawl—all except Tom Newcombe, who, being fully occupied with his grand idea, was careful to see that nothing that could render it successful was neglected. The governor had made his first journey to the island in a skiff which he had stolen in the harbor, and it was in this skiff that Tom intended to pay his visit to the Storm King. She could be handled so much easier than the heavy yawl, that their chances for escape, in case of pursuit, would be increased. After bailing all the water out of her, and examining the rowlocks, Tom brought out of the cabin two pairs of oars and a boat-hook, which he placed under the thwarts and tied fast, so that they could not be lost overboard while crossing the shoals; and next he produced, from some secret hiding-place, a suspicious-looking black bottle, which he put into his coat pocket.

“What’s that, cap’n?” asked the governor, who at that

moment came up, carrying a box of crackers on one arm, and a bundle of blankets under the other.

"It's coal-oil," replied Tom, with a chuckle. "I am going to make sure work of that yacht, if I succeed in getting into the galley. I'll sprinkle the contents of this bottle over the wood-work, and on the pile of kindling which I shall find under the stove; then I'll touch a match to it, and—whew!"

Tom ended the sentence with a prolonged whistle, and by throwing his arms about his head, indicating, no doubt, the rapidity with which the flames would spread over the devoted vessel.

"I have only one cause for uneasiness," said Tom, to himself, when the governor had gone on to the yawl. "This skiff is painted white, and can be seen a long distance, dark as it is. If we are discovered before we reach the yacht, my splendid idea is up stump; but if I can once get on board, and make my way into the galley without being seen, I'll be all right. Five minutes will do the work, and I won't care then if we are pursued. The fellows are all good oarsmen, and we can show that jolly-boat a clean pair of heels."

"Now, then," said the governor, picking up his lantern and peeping into every corner of the cabin, to make sure that nothing had been overlooked, "I reckon we're all ready. We're goin' to leave you here," he added, turning to the prisoner, who still lay bound and helpless on the floor.

"Well, I swan!" exclaimed Jed. "Aint you goin' to let me loose?"

"Not much. That would be a smart trick in us, would n't it, now?"

"I'll do some good hollering the minute you go away."

"All right. You will be discovered by your friends sometime durin' the day, most likely; but all the yellin' you can do won't help you none. The surf roars over the shoals loud enough to drown the report of a cannon. Good-by, Jed!"

"I'll see you again," said the prisoner, who did not seem to be at all concerned. "I'll help take you before the 'squire yet—I swan to man if I won't."

"You'll ketch us first, I reckon. Come on, fellers."

The Crusoe men left the cabin and clambered into the yawl. The governor grasped the tiller, and the others picked up the oars and stood ready to push the boat from the bank. Tom made the skiff's painter fast to a ring in the stern of the yawl, and seated himself beside the chief, who, seeing that every thing was ready for the start, gave the command to shove off; whereupon the Crusoe men thrust their oars against the bank, and the yawl moved slowly toward the rocks at the entrance of the cove, dragging the skiff after her.

As we have before remarked, the Crusoe men were now about to brave the real dangers incident to their undertaking. One of them was close at hand, and it was the only one Tom Newcombe dreaded to encounter. It was the crossing of the shoals. He had made the passage once in the *Mystery*, and it had tried his nerves severely; although the water was then comparatively quiet. He

knew that it would be worse this time, for the wind, which had been steadily increasing since sunset, was blowing briskly, and the roar of the waves, as they dashed over the ledge that formed the shoals, could be plainly heard in the cove. "It is a capital sailing wind," said Tom, with a great show of indifference. "Do n't I wish that yacht was in flames, and we were on board the Sweepstakes, standing down the harbor under a full press of canvas? I tell you, fellows—"

"Jerusalem!" ejaculated Will Atkins.

The yawl at that moment glided out from among the rocks that concealed the entrance to the cove, and the Crusoe men found themselves on the edge of the shoals. They stood appalled at the sight before them. Through the darkness could be seen the white waves, rolling in broken, angry masses across the ledge, and sending the spray high in air. At the further end of the shoals, and about two hundred yards distant, was a single pyramid of foam that rose above the other waves, and which seemed to be stationary. It was caused by the peculiar formation of the rocks beneath it, and was the governor's guide-post. It pointed out the channel that led across the shoals.

The Crusoe men took a hurried survey of the scene before them, and with one accord sprang to their feet. "Governor," said Friday, "I wouldn't go across there fur no money."

"You can just turn around and go back," chimed in Will Atkins. "Whenever we get tired of livin' we 'll let

you know. This boat could n't stand them breakers two minutes."

"Much you know about it, I guess," returned the chief, angrily. "We want to go to the village, don't we, an' we want to take our outfit with us? Well, then, how are we goin' to get there, I'd like to know, if we don't cross the shoals? Set down! Let no man move from his seat, or say a word. I've run the channel a dozen times, an' I can do it ag'in."

Sam did not think it best to tell his trembling crew that he had never attempted the passage in the face of such a breeze. Although he spoke bravely enough, he was really frightened, and his hand trembled as it rested on the tiller. Had there been any other way out of the cove, he would have been the last one to dare the fury of the waves; but he knew there was none, and, after he had succeeded in inducing his men to resume their seats, he drew in a long breath, shut his teeth hard against each other, and prepared for the work before him. He fastened his eyes on his guide-post, brought the yawl before the wind, let out the sheet, and the next moment the Crusoe men found themselves flying through the breakers with almost railroad speed. In front of them, on each side, and behind, the water was white with foam; and, when they got out from the shelter of the bluffs on the island, they found that Tom Newcombe's "capital sailing wind" was something very much like a gale. The yawl rocked and plunged over the waves that leaped wildly around her, sometimes almost grazing the

rocks as she flew along the channel. The Crusoe men held their breath in suspense, and their eyes were directed anxiously toward the white pyramid which seemed to shut them off from the still water beyond. It looked threatening, they discovered as they approached it, and they trembled when the wave, subsiding for an instant, revealed to them the black, ragged crest of the rock which lay directly in their course, and toward which they were being driven with terrific force. It was here the worst danger was to be encountered. The channel ran close alongside this rock, to windward, and the governor knew that it would require the exercise of all his skill to take the yawl past it in safety.

"Xury," he exclaimed, yelling at the top of his voice, to make himself heard above the roar of the wind and waves, "stand by the sheet and be ready to haul in fur life when I give the word."

By the time the mate had placed himself in a position to obey this order, the yawl had approached within a few yards of the ledge, and, to the no small astonishment and alarm of the Crusoe men, the governor did not change her course an inch. Suddenly her bow was buried beneath a pile of foam, and the next instant she was lifted on the crest of a tremendous billow, which carried her with redoubled speed toward the rock. This was too much for Friday and Jack Spaniard, who uttered a simultaneous cry of terror, and jumped to their feet, while Tom Newcombe turned away his head and clutched his seat with a death-gripe, expecting every moment to see the sides of

the boat smashed in, and to find himself struggling in the water.

“Set down!” thundered the governor. “Haul in, Xury!”

For a few seconds two opposing forces were at work upon the yawl. The wind blew harder than ever, as if it sympathized with the Crusoe men, and was doing its best to drive them out of reach of danger, while the waves came thicker and faster, and dashed their spray furiously into the faces of the yawl’s crew, seemingly determined upon their destruction. So evenly balanced was the power of the two elements, that, for a time, it was a matter of uncertainty whether the wind would force them away from the rock, or the waves hurl them upon it; but the wind began to gain a little at last, the yawl glided slowly, inch by inch, around the ledge into still water, and Tom, looking back, saw the pyramid of foam leaping higher than ever into the air, as if enraged at being cheated of its prey.

“Jerusalem!” ejaculated Will Atkins, gazing first at his companions, and then at the angry waves behind, as if he could hardly believe that they had passed them in safety. “*Jerusalem*, I say! Whew!”

“Well, I done it, didn’t I?” exclaimed the governor, drawing a long breath of relief. “I thank my lucky stars that I’ll never have to do it ag’in.”

It would have been hard work for any one to convince the Crusoe men that they would ever again attempt the passage of the shoals. They told one another that they

had seen quite enough of them, and that the dangers yet before them were insignificant, compared with those they had just encountered. But they did cross them a second time that night, and not a single boy in the band raised any objections to it.

The governor now directed the yawl's course toward the head of the island, and, as she flew along, he revealed to his crew some of the plans he had determined upon. It was necessary, he said, that the work before them should be performed with as little delay as possible ; consequently they would not take the yawl to the village with them, for she might be in their way. They would leave her at the head of the island, and stop for her when they came back. They would first secure possession of the Sweepstakes, and moor her at the end of the pier ; then they would visit Mr. Henry's store, help themselves to what provisions they needed, and after that assist the captain in carrying out his "splendid idea." Tom listened attentively to all the governor had to say, and something he had not before thought of came into his mind.

"Governor," said he, "why do you leave my work till the last ? Don't you remember I told you that Johnny Harding sleeps in the store every night ? Suppose that while you are effecting an entrance you awaken him ! He will give the alarm, and then, what will become of my idea ?"

"I'll risk that," replied the chief, confidently. "If we get inside the store he won't give no alarm. I know

how to make him keep still. Now, fellers," he added, turning the boat's head toward the island, "we'll stop here."

He ran the yawl's bow upon the beach, and with the assistance of his men moored her securely to the rocks, after which he ordered the band into the skiff. Will Atkins and Xury seated themselves at the oars, and in half an hour the skiff rounded the light-house pier, and moved up the harbor toward the place where the Sweepstakes lay at her anchorage.

CHAPTER IX.

JOHNNY HARDING'S VISITORS.



ABOUT nine o'clock, in the same evening in which happened the events we have just described, Johnny Harding leaned idly over the counter in Mr. Henry's store, whistling softly to himself, and gazing through the open door at a vessel in the harbor, which was about to begin her voyage to the West Indies. He looked as though he had been preparing for a game of fisticuffs with somebody, for his coat was off, his collar thrown open, and his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows. But there was no one in Newport with whom Johnny was likely to get into trouble, for he was one of those easy, good-natured boys who seldom have any differences with their fellows. He had worked hard all day, and this was the first leisure moment he had been allowed since morning. He had taken advantage of it to pull off his coat and enjoy the cool breeze of the evening.

Johnny, as we have before remarked, was now as steady, well-behaved a boy as could be found in the village. He had seen the time when he had thought it exceedingly "smart" to take part in some desperate scheme for mischief—like stealing 'Squire Thompson's horse and wagon,

and presenting him with some of his own fruit and vegetables, for instance—but he had come to the conclusion that not only was that a poor way to enjoy one's self, but it was a sure method of gaining a very unenviable reputation. Tom's runaway expedition had opened his eyes. A few of his companions congratulated him, and said that in bringing the Swallow back to land, after Rich had lost her in the ocean, he had performed an exploit to be proud of; but those whose opinions were worth any thing, shook their heads at him; and, although they did not have much to say about it, their actions indicated that they thought Johnny might have been in better business than running away with a lot of lazy students. Johnny began to think so too, and saw it was high time he turned over a new leaf, if he ever expected to be any body in the world. One thing that convinced him of this fact was, the manner in which Mr. Henry treated him.

There was a vacancy in the store, and it had been promised to Johnny, whose highest ambition was to become a business man. One morning he presented himself before the grocer, who was not a little surprised to see him. "Ah, yes," said he, when Johnny had made known his wants, "I'd like to have you here. I do n't know any one in Newport I would rather have for a clerk in my store, if I was only sure you could be trusted. But do you think you could put much faith in a boy who is continually running around of nights, and who is always in some kind of mischief? When I promised you the situation I had no idea you were a Night-hawk, you know."

Johnny thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and walked thoughtfully out of the store. He had never taken that view of the case, but he could not keep seeing that the grocer was right. He was angry at himself when he thought how foolish he had been, and, consequently, when some of his friends called on him that night, to inquire why he had missed the last meeting of their new society, Johnny answered them rather abruptly.

"I won't have any thing more to do with it," said he.

"Why, Harding, what's the matter?"

"The matter is just this," replied Johnny. "I can see, now, that I would have been a great deal better off in the world, if I had never had any thing to do with secret societies that were organized for nothing but mischief. Experience is a hard school, fellows, but it is a thorough one; and I'll never forget the lesson I have learned there. I am going to behave myself now."

"Well, this beats me, I never thought you would turn spooney."

"Say what you please, my mind is made up, and you can't turn me, any more than you can turn Tom Newcombe, when he has an idea. The society can get along without me."

Johnny was as good as his word, although it required the exercise of all his firmness to resist the pressure that was brought to bear upon him. The society found it uphill work to get along without him, for he held a high position in the organization, and was the only one in it who could study up a plan for mischief at two minutes

notice. Its members had often been sadly in need of the services of Tom Newcombe; and, now that Johnny was gone, the exploits were hardly worth boasting of. They tried to induce him to come back. They coaxed, praised, and ridiculed him, but it was in vain. Johnny had made up his mind after mature deliberation; he knew he was in the right, and for two months he held firmly to his purpose.

One night, as he was coming home from school, he met Mr. Henry, who began to laugh the moment he came in sight of Johnny. "Is this true that I hear about you?" he asked, as the boy came up. "Are you a spooney?"

"I do n't know, sir," was the reply. "If trying to behave myself makes me a spooney, I suppose I am one."

"Do n't you find it hard work?"

"Sometimes. They bother a fellow so. But I do n't care for that. I'm bound to stick to it."

Johnny moved off, and so did Mr. Henry, but when the latter had made a few steps, he stopped and looked back. "Johnny," said he, "if you feel like walking around to-morrow, we'll talk the matter over."

Johnny did feel like "walking around," and he made his appearance at the store bright and early. It did not take long to arrange matters to his satisfaction, and he had now been in Mr. Henry's employ about two weeks, and he began to believe that he was in a fair way to redeem himself. Mr. Henry was of the same opinion. He had faith in Johnny's good resolutions, and he never had occasion to regret that he had taken him into the store.

Johnny's employer stood at his desk putting away his books and papers, while the clerk leaned on the counter and watched the vessel in the harbor. At last Mr. Henry closed and locked his safe, and, turning to Johnny, said:

"I shall leave you to-night with a big responsibility."

"How much is it, sir?" asked the clerk, who knew that the grocer had reference to the money in the safe.

"Seven thousand dollars," answered Mr. Henry. "The greater portion of it belongs to my brother, who has come down from Boston to take up a note that falls due to-morrow. If he fails to pay it, his creditors will have something to say to me, for I indorsed the note. There are also two thousand dollars of my own money in the safe, with which I intend to pay some bills in the morning. If I lose it I am ruined. I should n't wonder if you had visitors to-night," added the grocer, as he picked up his hat and cane; "so keep your eyes open."

"All right, sir," replied Johnny. "I'll defend that safe against an army of burglars."

Mr. Henry was jesting, and so was Johnny; not about the money, or the trouble its loss would occasion, but about the robbers. There was certainly that amount in the safe, and it was equally certain that it was needed for just the purposes that Mr. Henry had indicated, but he was not in earnest when he told his clerk to look out for visitors. No one ever dreamed of such a thing as a burglary in Newport. Johnny had never heard of one, except through the papers, but this night was to add a new chapter to his experience.

"Seven thousand dollars!" said he to himself, as he walked out of the store, and began putting up the shutters. "That's a nice little sum of money. I wonder if I shall ever own as much! I should say not, unless I get a big increase on my present salary. People don't live long enough nowadays to grow rich on four dollars and a half a week. Never mind, every dog has his day, and who knows but there is one coming for Jack Harding? What can I do for you this evening, gentlemen?"

This question was addressed to a couple of rough-looking men, who just then entered the store. Johnny tried to obtain a glimpse of their faces as he spoke to them, but he did not succeed, for their features were concealed by the collars of their pea-jackets, which were pulled up around their ears, and by their slouch hats, which were drawn down over their eyes.

"A couple of sailors, with the ague," soliloquized the clerk, snatching up his hat and fanning himself vigorously, when he thought how near sweltering he would be if he was bundled up like that.

The customers stood in the middle of the floor, looking about them with every expression of curiosity, like country fellows who had just come out of their native woods, while Johnny leaned one elbow on the counter and waited for them to make known their wants.

"Where's the boss?" inquired one of them at length.

"Do you mean Mr. Henry? He has gone home."

"Will he be back to-night?"

Johnny replied that he would not.

There was another long pause, during which the men gazed about the store, and appeared to be examining every article of merchandise in it, and finally one of them walked up to the counter, while his companion strolled toward the little office where Johnny slept. He first looked at the clerk, as if trying to recognize an old acquaintance in him, and asked: "Got any pipes?"

"Plenty of them, sir," was the prompt reply. "We have a fine assortment, that was just received from Boston this morning."

Johnny thought he had by this time become well enough posted in his business to tell, by the appearance of his customers, what quality of goods they wanted. He thought this man was a common sailor, and he put out for his inspection a box of cheap clay pipes. The man took his hands out of his pockets to examine the pipes, and Johnny saw that they were fair and white, looking very unlike the brown, toil-hardened hands of a sailor.

"He must be a captain," thought the clerk. "If he is, he wants something better than a clay pipe. Here are some genuine imported meerschaums, in the showcase, sir," said he.

The customer was a long time making up his mind which he wanted. He looked first at the clay pipes, then at the meerschaums, weighed several of the latter in his hand, and finally he pulled out his pocket-book. Then it took him some time longer to find a five cent piece; and when he had paid for one of the clay pipes

he rested his hands on the counter, and looked up at the articles on the shelves, as if wondering if he did not want something else. Johnny waited patiently for him to come to some conclusion on this point, and, at the same time, kept close watch of the other customer, whose movements were somewhat singular. He first produced a pipe from the pocket of his pea-jacket, and, walking around the end of the counter to the match-box, prepared to indulge in a smoke. Johnny, out of the corner of his eye, saw that, while he was filling his pipe, his gaze wandered up the space behind the counter, until it rested on the safe, which he regarded long and earnestly. If Johnny could have read the thoughts that were passing through his mind, they might have caused him some uneasiness; but, believing that the man had found an object of curiosity in the strong box, he felt disposed to laugh at him.

"Where could he have passed all his life, anyhow?" thought the clerk. "He never saw a fire-proof safe before. What would he say, I wonder, if he could look at the combination lock inside, that can't be opened, even by a man who understands it, in less than ten minutes!"

After burning half a dozen matches, the customer got his pipe lighted to his satisfaction, and began walking about the store again. He glanced into the little office where Johnny slept, went to the front door and gazed up and down the street, thence to the side door, which he opened, and looked out into the passage-way that ran between the store and Mr. Newcombe's elevator, and

finally he examined the shutters that Johnny had just put up. Having completed the rounds of the store, he began to whistle, whereupon the man at the counter picked up his pocket-book and followed his companion, who walked out on the wharf.

“Does any body suppose they ever saw a grocery-store before?” said Johnny, to himself, as he stood in the door and watched his customers until they disappeared in the darkness. “I’ve seen some grecif men in my time, but these carry off the palm. The one that bought the pipe is not a sailor, for, if he was, he would not have been so particular. He would have taken whatever was offered him, and paid double its value, if I had seen fit to demand it, and without a moment’s hesitation. They are hard-looking fellows, anyhow.”

Having thus expressed his opinion of his customers, Johnny struck up a cheerful whistle, and resumed the work of putting up the shutters. When this had been done, he locked the door, and put out all the lamps except one, which he carried into his bed-room, and sat down to read until he should become sleepy. The book was so interesting that Johnny forgot that he had worked hard all day and was very sleepy, and it was half-past ten o’clock before he knew it. Finding that his eye-lids were growing heavy, he went the rounds of the store once more, tried all the doors and windows, to make sure that he had fastened them securely, and then tumbled into bed. He always slept the sleep of the healthy, and, on this particular evening, he slept so soundly that he did not hear what

was going on at the side door, which opened into the passage-way. About midnight, however, he awoke with a start, and with a presentment that there was something wrong. He was not mistaken, for when his eyes were fairly open, he found that his bed-room was flooded with light. He was not alone, either; there were two persons in his room who had no business there. One was standing in the door-way, holding a sledge-hammer and an iron punch in one hand, and a short piece of rope in the other; and the one who stood at the head of his bed carried something the clerk did not like the looks of—a revolver, the muzzle of which was pointed straight at his head. A single glance was enough to establish the identity of these unwelcome visitors. They were his customers of the previous evening.

“What are you doing in here?” exclaimed Johnny, starting up on his elbow. “Get out o’ this!”

“Silence!” whispered the man with the revolver, seizing Johnny by the shoulder and placing the muzzle of the weapon against his forehead. “If you utter another word you are a dead man.”

The bare thought of being awakened out of a sound sleep, to find a couple of burglars in one’s bed-room, is enough to send a thrill through the strongest nerves; and Johnny, although he was far from being a coward, was thoroughly frightened. He knew, however, that he was in no danger of bodily harm as long as he obeyed the robbers’ injunction and kept quiet. They were not there to injure him—they were after the seven thousand dollars

in the safe ; and Johnny was powerless to prevent them from taking it.

“Come in here and tie him, Ned,” said the man with the revolver.

Ned, after depositing his hammer and punch on the floor, advanced into the room, and almost before Johnny could tell what had happened to him, he was lying on his face in the bed, with his arms fastened behind his back, his feet tied to the bed-post, and a towel bound tightly over his mouth.

“Now, then, my hearty, you’re safe, and the best thing you can do is to keep perfectly still. We do n’t want to hurt you, but if you begin any fuss, we’ll settle you in a hurry.”

So saying, the robbers left him, and began their work in the store.

From the position in which he lay, the clerk could witness all their operations, and he could not help thinking that the burglars were very expert in their business. They moved quickly, but so noiselessly that Johnny, if he had not seen them, would not have known that they were there. They first pulled the counter from its place, and wheeled the safe into the middle of the store ; after which one of them laid a coil of rope upon the floor, and by their united efforts, the safe was tipped over on its back and placed upon it. Their next move was to strip the blankets and quilts from Johnny’s bed, and wrap them around the safe, leaving a small opening in them directly over the lock. Then one of the robbers picked up

the punch, and held it close to the handle of the lock, and the other, with one swift blow of the sledge-hammer, drove its sharp point through the thin sheet of iron that formed the outside of the safe. Into the hole thus made they poured a quantity of powder, adjusted a slow match, which one of them touched off with the cigar he had been tranquilly smoking all the while, and then the robbers, hastily closing the slide of the dark lantern, retreated outside the building to await the result. The clerk was sure they had gone out, for he heard the side door open and close very carefully.

"They're going to blow the safe open," thought Johnny, as he lay and watched the slow match, flashing and sparkling as the fire approached the powder. "I hope it will make an awful noise. Where's Mr. Newcombe's night watchman, I wonder, that he did n't see these fellows come in here!"

A single flash of light illuminated the store for an instant, and then came the report. It was not near as loud as Johnny expected it would be, for it was deadened by the blankets and coil of rope; but it jarred the glass-ware behind the counter, and he hoped it might attract somebody's attention. For five minutes he lay listening and waiting, but the robbers did not return. Could they have been frightened from their work? If that was the case, Johnny wished that the person who had alarmed them would come in and release him, for his position was getting to be very uncomfortable. Five minutes more elapsed, and then he heard the side door open, and

stealthy footsteps enter the store. The lantern blazed up again, and Johnny was astonished to see that the robbers had been reënforced. There were seven of them now.

“A thousand dollars apiece for the rascals,” said he, to himself. “That’s a good deal for one night’s work. Mr. Henry little imagined, when he told me that I should have visitors before morning, that his words would come true!”

Johnny brought his soliloquy to a close very suddenly, raised his head as high as he could from the bed, and gazed earnestly at the robbers’ companions. He was certain that he had seen them before. He winked his eyes hard, and looked again. There could be no mistake about it. The new-comers were Sam Barton and his band of outlaws. He had believed that the governor was at the bottom of the harbor, but there he was, as lively and full of mischief as ever. Johnny had never been more bewildered in his life.

CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.



THE last time we saw the Crusoe men they were rowing up the harbor toward the place where the Sweepstakes lay at her anchorage. They expected to secure possession of her without any difficulty, and to take her down the harbor, through the shipping that lay at the wharves, without attracting attention. 'Squire Thompson never left a watch on board the schooner, and it was not likely that any body's suspicions would be aroused by so common an occurrence as a vessel passing out of the harbor at midnight. This part of the undertaking did not trouble the governor, but his heart beat a trifle faster than usual whenever he thought of the provisions.

The Crusoe men pulled up the harbor as though they had a perfect right to be there. They did not attempt to move quietly, for that alone would have been sufficient to excite the curiosity of the watch on some of the vessels at the wharves, who might feel themselves called upon to follow their movements, and that, to say the least, would be very inconvenient. The governor did not want to answer any questions, and he knew that the

only way to avoid suspicion was to go about his work boldly. He kept the skiff headed up the harbor until he passed the Sweepstakes, which lay at her usual moorings. As he went by he examined the vessel closely, and was delighted to see that she was deserted.

"Fellers," said he, suddenly, "would n't we have been in a fix if 'Squire Thompson had taken it into his head this afternoon to go off on one of his fishing excursions? What would we have done? Luck is on our side, howsomever, an' we are all right. The schooner is our 'n, an' 'Squire Thompson has put his eyes on her for the last time. Cap'n, you will take command, an' get the vessel down to the end of the pier as soon as possible. Don't try to be too still while you are gettin' under way, fur, if you do, the fellers who see us will know that we are doin' something we haint got no business to do."

As the governor said this he turned the skiff down the harbor again, and when they reached the schooner, Friday made the painter fast, and the Crusoe men clambered over the rail. Tom was once more captain of a vessel.

"Mr. Mate," said he, as soon as his feet touched the deck, "get under way immediately."

"Will Atkins," said Xury, "drop that skiff astern, an' the rest of us stand by to hist the canvas."

Tom was about to attempt something he had never had the courage to try before, and that was, to take a vessel down the harbor under sail. For a wonder, he had no misgivings. The wind, although strong, was

fair, and as the captain thought it very probable that he might be called upon to navigate the schooner through some difficult places before their cruise was ended, he concluded that it was best to begin practicing at once. He lent a hand in hoisting the sails, and, when every thing was ready for the start, he sent Xury to the wheel, and slipped the chain himself. He did not like the idea of starting on a long voyage without an anchor, but it would have been a quarter of an hour's work to raise it, and Tom was anxious to leave the village with the least possible delay. As long as he remained there he was in danger.

The mate did not labor under as many disadvantages now as he did when he piloted the yacht down the harbor on that stormy night. He did not have the gale to contend with, and he could see where he was going. He took the schooner through the shipping without the least difficulty, and rounded to at the end of the pier. Tom superintended the execution of this maneuver himself, and, somewhat to his surprise, made an excellent landing. He brought the Sweepstakes alongside the pier so gently, that the concussion would not have broken an egg-shell. That was something worth boasting of, and Tom, encouraged at his success, began to believe that he was "cut out" expressly for a sea captain.

"Now comes the worst part of the business," said the governor, when Tom had got out a head-line and made the schooner fast to the pier. "What are you goin' to do while we are gone, cap'n?"

"I'll stay here and watch the vessel," replied Tom. "I told you I would n't have a hand in stealing the provisions."

"Somebody must do it," said the chief. "We can't go to sea without grub."

"But how are you going to get into the store?"

"Do you see this yere?" answered the governor, showing an auger he carried in his hand. "The door that opens into the alley that runs between the store an' your father's elevator is fastened with a hook. We'll bore two or three holes through the door, an' then I'll put in my hand an' lift up that hook. It's just as easy as fallin' off a log."

"Look out for my father's night watchman," said Tom. "He's always got his eyes open, and if he catches you prowling about that passage-way he'll bring our cruise to an end in a hurry."

The governor had thought of that watchman more than once, and he was afraid of him. He would have breathed a good deal easier had he known that there was no danger to be apprehended from him, and that two other obstacles had also been removed from his path. The watchman was at that moment lying behind the elevator, bound hand and foot; the door which led into the store from the passage-way had already been opened in precisely the same way that the governor intended to open it, and Johnny Harding was powerless to resist them, or to give the alarm. But the Crusoe men did not know this, and more than one of them would have

been glad of some excuse for declining to assist in so hazardous an enterprise.

"Now, fellers," said the chief, "if there are any cowards in this yere band, I want to know it before we go any farther. If there are any among you who aint willin' to promise to stand by me to the last, let them step out on one side, so that I can have a look at 'em."

The governor paused, but none of the band moved.

"I am glad to see that you are all brave men," continued Sam. "If any one of you tries to shirk his duty when it comes to the pinch, we'll throw him over; he sha'n't go on this expedition. Now let's make a break, fur the quicker we get to work the sooner we'll get done. Friday, shoulder one of them handspikes an' stand by to use it on Johnny Harding if he makes a fuss."

"And, Friday," chimed in Tom, "if you do hit him, hit him hard. That boy has nearly bothered the life out of me."

The governor and his companions clambered over the rail and disappeared from the view of Tom Newcombe, who paced impatiently up and down the wharf, now and then stopping to survey his vessel, and wishing that he could look far enough into the future to see what part she was destined to play in the Crusoe drama. If they were pursued, was she fleet enough to carry them out of harm's way? Would she take them safely to their island, or would she be capsized and sunk before she got out of Buzzard's Bay? Tom did not bother his head much about these questions, for he knew that the little schooner

was staunch and swift, and, as he began to have great confidence in his abilities as a navigator and seaman, he was sure that he could bring her safely out of any danger that might befall her. On the subject of destroying the Storm King, however, he debated long and earnestly. He began to see that there was danger in it. The students were alert and watchful, and if they caught him on board the vessel with matches and a bottle of coal-oil in his pocket, what would they do to him? Tom trembled a little as he asked himself this question, but he never once thought of giving up his "splendid idea." He only wished that the work was done, and that he was well out to sea with the Sweepstakes. Meanwhile, the governor and his men moved cautiously along the wharf toward Mr. Henry's store. They walked around the elevator without seeing any signs of the watchman, and were about to enter the passage when Sam, who was leading the way, suddenly stopped.

"What was that noise?" he asked, turning to his companions. "Did n't you hear something drop in the store?"

"I heard it thunder," replied Jack Spaniard.

"So did I," said Xury.

"That was n't thunder," returned the chief. "It was some other kind of noise; an' I am sure it was in the store. Mebbe Harding is movin' around in there. You stay here, an' I'll go to the door an' listen."

The Crusoe men concealed themselves behind the elevator, and the governor moved up the passage-way, holding in his hand a bag which he had brought to carry away

his share of the provisions, and which he also intended to use in conquering Johnny Harding, if the opportunity presented itself. If the clerk was awake, and should happen to come to the door, he would throw the bag over his head, and hold him fast until his men could come to his assistance. He approached the door very cautiously, and when he reached it, he stopped and looked at it in astonishment. A hole had been cut in it over the lock, and the door was ajar. Sam thought he must be dreaming. He looked around him to make sure that no one was observing his movements, and then placed his hand against the door, which yielded to his touch.

"Well, now, if this yere do n't beat all the world," said the governor to himself. "Is there another Crusoe band in the village, I wonder?"

"Look here, partner," whispered a voice close at his elbow, "this is our job. You're about a quarter of an hour too late."

Sam turned and saw a man, who was muffled up to the eyes, standing beside him. His heart fairly came up into his mouth. He was as frightened as a boy could be, and he would have yelled and taken to his heels, but he seemed to have lost all control over himself. He stood like one petrified. To save his life he could not utter a sound, neither could he move hand or foot. He was caught, he could see that plainly; and now would come the punishment.

"How do you happen to know any thing about it?" whispered the man

"About what?" Sam almost gasped, recovering the use of his tongue after a desperate effort.

"About the money," was the reply. "We followed him all the way from Boston."

"Follered who?"

"Why, Mr. Henry; the brother of the man who owns this store. He had five thousand dollars with him. We have done all the work, but, since you are here, I suppose we must divide with you."

"Divide what?" asked the governor, utterly unable to understand what the man was trying to get at, and astonished that he did not put a pair of hand-cuffs upon him at once.

"O, divide what!" repeated the burglar, impatiently. "Why, the money, of course—the five thousand dollars. What else did you come here for?"

"Me! I come here for grub, me an' my men. We don't know nothin' about no five thousand dollars."

At this moment the other robber came up, and the first words he spoke indicated that he was not at all pleased to see Sam. "We always have hard luck," said he. "This is the third time we've had to divide with fellows who didn't help us do the work. How many are there in your crowd?"

"Six," replied the governor. He had by this time partially recovered his wits, and began to understand the matter. There was money in the safe, these men had come after it, and, believing him to be a robber like themselves, they were grumbling because they were afraid

they would be obliged to share the spoils with him. Sam did not want the money, but he did want provisions; and he was convinced, now, that the burglars would not stand in his way. "There are five of us here, an' one more down to the boat," added the chief.

"But he says he don't know any thing about the money," observed the robber, who had first spoken to Sam. "He is here after something to eat. What are you going to do when you get your provisions?"

"We're going to sea."

"Are you? Have you got a vessel?"

"Sartinly, we have. How could we go to sea without a vessel?"

"That's lucky. Now I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll give you a thousand dollars, if you will take us with you."

The governor caught his breath as if some one had suddenly dashed a bucket of ice-water over him. A thousand dollars! Was n't he in luck for once in his life? What a multitude of comforts and luxuries that would buy for the Crusoe band! They could stop at some town during their cruise, and purchase every thing they needed to complete their outfit. "But, perhaps, you don't want to go where we are going," said Sam.

"We don't care where you are bound. So long as you are going to sea, that's enough for us. We want to get as far away from this place as possible. What do you say? We're in a hurry."

"I say it is a bargain," replied the governor.

“All right. We’ll go in now and get our money, and you can help yourselves to the provisions. Where are your partners? Let’s have a look at them.”

Sam, almost beside himself with joy at this unexpected freak of fortune, hurried off to find his companions. In a few excited words he explained to them what had happened, and so astonished and bewildered were the Crusoe men, that for a moment they had nothing to say. They had never heard of such a thing before, and some of them were afraid to trust the robbers.

“Mebbe they’re just foolin’ us,” said Jack Spaniard; “an’ when they get us into the store, they’ll arrest the whole kit an’ bilin’ of us.”

“Arrest us!” sneered Sam. “They aint constables, I tell you; they’re burglars. Did n’t they cut that hole through the door, an’ do n’t they say that they’re after the money that’s in the safe? We do n’t want to lose the chance of makin’ a thousand dollars if we can help it. Just think of the grub an’ things it will buy!”

The governor had considerable difficulty in convincing his men that it was “all right,” but he did succeed at last, and induced them to follow him to the door where he had left the robbers. The latter peered into their faces as they came up, and, after satisfying themselves that the coast was clear, led the way into the store. When the lantern was turned up, Sam and his men looked at the burglars, and the burglars looked at them. The result of the examination appeared to be satisfactory on both sides, for the robbers resumed their work on the safe, while the

Crusoe men, now feeling perfectly at their ease, gazed about the store. They looked at the shattered safe, at Jonny Harding, who lay a prisoner on his bed, and watched with greedy eyes the packages of greenbacks which the burglars took from the strong box, and stowed away in a valise.

"Where's our thousand dollars?" asked the governor, at length. "If you want to go to sea with us, you had better pay us in advance."

"Now, don't you be in a hurry," was the gruff reply. "When you have taken us safely out of sight of Newport, you shall have your money, and not before. You'd better get to work, there. We've wasted time enough already."

This aroused the Crusoe men, and they began to bestir themselves. They appropriated to their own use a pile of bags which Xury found behind the counter, and, by the time the robbers had finished overhauling the contents of the safe, they had collected a large supply of provisions, consisting of hams, crackers, codfish, cheese, coffee, and sugar. Johnny watched all their movements, and before he had quite made up his mind whether the scene transpiring before him was a dream or a reality, the robbers had finished their work and gone out, leaving the store in total darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

TOM'S SPLENDID IDEA.



THE Crusoe men, congratulating themselves on their good fortune, and staggering under their heavy loads of provisions, hurried back to the schooner, and their appearance relieved the anxiety Tom had begun to feel at their prolonged absence. He listened in amazement to the governor's description of the events that had transpired at the store, and looked at the robbers with curiosity. He could not help telling himself that he had seen the time that he would have been horrified at the thought of having such outlaws for shipmates, but now he did not feel the least tremor, and he regarded the fact as evidence that he was getting to be a very brave sort of fellow.

"Now, then," said the chief, when the provisions had been stowed away in the hold. "I s'pose you gentlemen don't care to stay in the village any longer than you can help, do you? Well, there's a yawl at the end of the pier, an' you can get into it an' pull out into the bay. Hold straight across fur the head of the island, an' before you get there we'll overtake you. We've got a little more business to do before we say good-by to Newport."

The robbers thought it best to follow Sam's advice. They clambered down into the yawl, and the Crusoe men took their seats in the skiff, and were about to shove off from the pier, when Tom, upon putting his hand into his pocket to assure himself that his incendiary materials were safe, found, to his dismay, that he had forgotten something.

"O, now, hold on, governor," he drawled. "How am I going to set fire to that yacht without any matches, I'd like to know!"

"You're a purty feller, aint you?" exclaimed Atkins, who had all along shown a distaste for the dangers that attended their preparations for the cruise. "We'll have to give up burnin' the sloop now, an' I am glad of it. There aint no kind o' sense in it, no how. It's runnin' a big risk fur nothing."

"O, now, I want you to quit calling me a pretty fellow," whined Tom, who, if he had possessed the courage, would have been glad to fight somebody. "I won't give up my splendid idea. There's just as much sense in it as there is in stealing provisions. I am provoked at myself for forgetting those matches. Have n't you got some, governor?"

"Nary match," replied Sam. "But I'll tell you what you can do, cap'n. You can run up to the store an' get some. You'll find plenty there, an' Harding can't hinder you from takin' as many as you want."

"But it is dark, is n't it? How can I find the matches without a light?"

"Them bugglars left their lantern on the counter. Just turn the slide, an' you'll have light enough. Hurry up, now, an' we'll wait here fur you."

Tom, whose thoughts were so completely wrapped up in his grand project that he did not stop to consider that it might prove to be a very disagreeable piece of business to go groping about the store in the dark, sprang out of the skiff and ran up the wharf. "I'll see Johnny Harding," said he to himself. "The governor said that those burglars left him tied and gagged, and so I can do what I please with him. Perhaps I'll give him a punch or two, just to show him that I have not forgotten how badly he has treated me since I had that yacht built. I told him that I would get even with him some day."

Tom involuntarily increased his pace when he thought how pleasant a sight it would be to his eyes to see his tormentor bound hand and foot, and powerless to reply to his taunts, or to resist him if he concluded to punish him for what he had done, and when he reached the store he pushed the door open and entered without hesitation. He came to a stand-still, however, before he had fairly crossed the threshold, and his heart seemed to stop beating when his ear caught the sound of a light footstep. Tom was almost on the point of turning and running for his life, but the remembrance of his "splendid idea," which he was on the very eve of carrying into execution, restrained him. He listened, but the sound was not repeated, and, calling all his courage to his aid, he walked boldly across the store. As he passed his

hands over the counter they came in contact with the lantern, which blazed up when he opened the slide. He turned the bull's eye toward every corner of the store, almost expecting to see somebody advancing upon him, and he drew a long breath of relief when he found that he was alone. Having satisfied himself on this point, he glanced at the safe, emptied the contents of the match box into his pocket, and then started toward the office to look at Johnny Harding. As he approached the door, he was surprised to see that the bed was empty. There lay the rope with which Johnny had been confined, and the towel that had been used as a gag, but Johnny himself was nowhere to be seen.

"This is very strange," thought Tom. "I understood the governor to say that he was tied, hand and foot, to his bed."

Tom advanced one more step, which brought him just inside the door of the office. He regretted, an instant afterward, that he had taken that step, for, as he stood bending forward, holding the lantern aloft, and looking toward the bed to assure himself that Johnny was really not there, a pair of strong arms were suddenly thrown around his neck, his heels flew up, and Tom found himself prostrate on the floor.

Although Johnny Harding stood as much in fear of bodily harm as any body, he determined, in spite of the robbers' threats, that he would not remain a passive prisoner. Even while the burglar was tying him, and his companion was holding the revolver to his head, the

clerk's brain was busy with thoughts of escape. He was not foolish enough to imagine that he could cope with two grown men, even under the most favorable circumstances, but he hoped that he might find means to free himself, so that, as soon as the robbers left the store, he could procure assistance, and begin the pursuit without loss of time. When the burglars retreated outside the building to await the explosion, Johnny struggled desperately with his bonds; and if his visitors had thought to look at him when they returned, they would have discovered that one of his hands was free. When they took their final departure, Johnny removed the towel with his liberated hand, and, after ten minutes' hard work, he arose from the bed and began pulling on his clothes with all possible haste.

"Those fellows won't get very far away with that money; not if this clerk knows himself, and he thinks he does," said Johnny to himself. "I'll raise the town in two minutes. And there's the governor again, as big as life and as ugly as ever. How did he get back? He is going to receive a thousand dollars for taking those villains out to sea, is he? Not much! I'll have something to say about that."

Johnny had by this time got into his trowsers and boots; and catching up his hat, he ran out of the office just as the side door opened, admitting Tom Newcombe. Believing that the burglars had returned, the clerk beat a hasty retreat, and it was the sound of his footsteps that had alarmed Tom.

Johnny concealed himself behind the door of the office, and awaited the issue of events with fear and trembling. If the burglar discovered that he had succeeded in liberating himself, he would, of course, bind him again; and this time he would do his work so thoroughly that Johnny would remain a prisoner until he was released. That would be about seven o'clock in the morning, for that was the hour at which Mr. Henry generally made his appearance—and by that time the burglars would be miles away with their booty.

Johnny knew when Tom turned up the light, and emptied the match-box; and when he heard him approaching the office, his excitement and alarm increased. When Tom stepped inside the door, a desperate plan for escape suddenly suggested itself to him. He would rush out of his concealment, throw the intruder down, and get out of the store before he could recover his feet. He was by no means certain that he could do this, but it was his only chance, and it was no sooner conceived than it was carried into execution. The captain of the Crusoe band was prostrated with the greatest ease, and Johnny, who had fallen to the floor with him, would have jumped up and taken to his heels without knowing who his visitor was, if Tom had only kept quiet. But the latter, astonished at the suddenness of the attack, and recognizing his assailant, thought it was all over with him, and drawled out:

“O, now, what are you doing, Harding?”

“Tom Newcombe!” exclaimed the clerk, in great amazement.

"O, now, yes, it's I!" whined Tom.

"Well, I declare!" said Johnny, catching up the rope with which he had been confined a few minutes before, "wonders will never cease. I thought you were at the North Pole by this time; but, if I had taken a second thought, I would have known that you were in some way mixed up in this business. How much of that money will fall to your share?"

"O, now, what are you doing, I say?" roared Tom; for Johnny, while he was speaking, had crossed the captain's hands behind his back, and was passing the rope around them. "Let me up!"

"I can't see it, Tom," was the reply. "You are a dangerous fellow, and I think it is my duty to secure you. I believe this night's work is the result of your having an idea."

The captain of the Crusoe band did not waste any more breath in words. He saw that the tables were likely to be turned on him, and that the boy he had come there to abuse and maltreat, was in a fair way to put it out of his power to carry his splendid scheme into execution. He must escape from him, or the expedition would fall through; and, more than that, he must make a prisoner of the clerk, or he would give the alarm. Johnny thought that Tom, although he had thus far kept himself in the back ground, was the cause of all the troubles that had befallen him that night—that he was the projector and manager of the robbery. It was undoubtedly another of his grand ideas. Tom's past history warranted such a

supposition. He had planned many a plundering expedition against orchards and melon patches ; he had twice assisted in stealing a vessel ; he was one of the acknowledged leaders of an organization of rogues ; he had been growing worse and worse every day, for the last year of his life, and it was reasonable to suppose that he had, by this time, become bad enough to conceive of a burglary to replenish the treasury of the Crusoe band. Johnny determined to capture him, and learn all about the proposed movements of the robbers. He had made up his mind that the money must be recovered ; and every item of information would be of value to him.

This was the second fight Tom had that night, and it was a lively one. During its progress, he gained a good idea of Johnny's power of muscle, and Johnny thought Tom was a remarkably strong and active boy to be the coward he was. Long wind, and the consciousness of being in the right, brought the clerk off with flying colors ; and, after a five minutes' struggle, the captain of the Crusoe band lay helpless on the bed, and Johnny, with his hands in his pockets, stood looking at him. Tom was almost beside himself with rage and alarm, but the victor was as cool as a cucumber.

"Tom," said he, as soon as he had recovered his breath, ' did it never occur to you that you are getting low down in the world ? What will your father say when he hears that you are running around with a lot of burglars ? By gracious, old fellow, you're done for—you're gone up ! Where's that money ? "

"O, now, it's half way to the island," whined Tom. "You'll let me go, won't you, Johnny? I'll never do it again."

"Who's got the money?" demanded the clerk.

"Those two robbers. They got into a yawl and started off. The governor told them to wait for us at the head of the island. Say, Johnny, are you going to release me?"

"Where did you leave the governor and his crew?"

"In a skiff, at the end of the pier. Let me go, Johnny, won't you? I'll never do it again, as long as I live."

"How were you going to sea?"

"In the Sweepstakes. We captured her, and she is ready and waiting now. Say, Johnny, why don't you answer my question?"

"Where have you been during the last two weeks?"

"On Block Island. We've got a harboring place there, near the shoals. O, now, Johnny, come back here and release me."

But the clerk was gone before the words were fairly out of Tom's mouth. He had heard enough to satisfy him, and he believed that prompt action on his part was all that was needed to insure the capture of the robbers.

"I'll run down to the vessels, in front of the elevator, and alarm the watch," soliloquized the clerk. "I'll ask one of the captains to send a boat's crew after the governor and his crowd, and then I'll raise men enough to handle the Sweepstakes. I'll start for the island in her, and the robbers, thinking it's all right, will come on board,

and the first thing they know they 'll be prisoners, and I 'll have possession of the seven thousand dollars. That's the way to work it."

Fully occupied with such thoughts as these, Johnny pulled open the door and sprang out into the passage-way, where he came in violent contact with somebody. It was the governor, who, impatient at Tom's delay, had come up to see what was the matter with him.

"Hello, here, cap'n!" he growled. "Haint you got eyes that you can't see nothing? If you're all ready now, let's be off."

The clerk, recognizing the voice, turned instantly and ran into the store, banging the door after him. He might have escaped by going out at the other end of the passage; but his first thought was of his prisoner. If he left the store, the governor would, of course, go in and release Tom; and that was something Johnny did not intend he should do. "A bird in the hand is worth a dozen in the bush," thought he. "It is my business to look out for Tom, now that I have got him. The other robbers can be attended to at any time."

Sam Barton was utterly confounded. He stood for a moment gazing stupidly at the door, and then turned toward his men, who had followed close at his heels, as if expecting some of them to suggest a way out of this new trouble.

"What's the row now, governor?" whispered Xury
"What's the cap'n gone back fur?"

"That was n't the cap'n," replied Sam. "It was Hard-

ing; an' I'll bet a million dollars that he's got Tommy a prisoner in there."

"I just know he has," snarled Will Atkins. "That's the kind of luck we're havin' to-night. Let's go away an' leave him. We can't do any thing fur him."

"We can, too," replied the chief, angrily. "Now, Atkins, I don't want to hear any more out of you about desertin' a comrade in distress, fur I haint forgot that you are a mutineer. You're always growlin', an' I'm gettin' teetotally tired of listenin' to it. If you had any sense at all, you would know that we must get into this store fur two reasons. We're bound to capture Harding ag'in, fur, if we don't, he'll come out the minute we are gone, an' raise a yell; an' we'll have the whole town after us in no time. An' we must get the cap'n out of there, 'cause we can't get along without him. Is there any body else in the band who knows enough to take command of the vessel? Do you, Atkins?"

"Of course not. I never was to sea in my life."

"Well, then, what are you grumblin' about? None of us haint been to sea, except Tommy. He's been miles an' miles out of sight of land; he is the only one among us who understands the winds an' currents, an' we must release him, or give up the expedition."

As the governor said this he tried the door, but found it fastened. He stooped down and looked through the hole the burglars had cut over the lock, and by the light of the lantern, which was standing on the table in the office, he could see Johnny with an uplifted poker,

ready to strike the first hand that was put in to raise the hasp. The chief explained the state of affairs to his men, adding, that they must determine upon some plan to attack Johnny in the rear, or to get him away from the door long enough for them to open it.

"Hold on a minute, governor!" exclaimed Xury, suddenly; "I'll fix that. Lend a hand here, Friday."

The mate ran off, followed by Friday, and in a few minutes they returned, bringing a ladder which they had found behind the elevator, and which they began to raise against the side of the store.

"Do you see that winder up there?" asked Xury. "Well, give me one man an' we will go in there, an' come down the stairs. If Harding pitches into us, you can open the door an' come in; an' if he stands by to defend the door, me an' my man will soon fix him."

"That's a good idea," said the chief. "Friday, you go with Xury. Jack Spaniard, run down to the skiff an' bring up the oars. Harding has got an iron poker, you know, an' you will need something to make you even with him. But mebbe the winder is fastened, Xury."

"I know it is, 'cause I've looked at it a hundred times before to-night. It is fastened with a stick; but the glass is broke, an' I can soon throw the stick down."

The two Crusoe men mounted the ladder, and by the time the window was raised Jack Spaniard returned with the oars, which Sam passed up to the mate, saying:

"Don't be no ways backward about usin' 'em if you get a chance. Punch him hard, fur he is a spunky feller."

Xury and his companion disappeared, and the governor waited impatiently for them to begin the attack. All these movements had been accomplished so quietly that Johnny, wholly intent upon watching the door, had no suspicions of what was going on until he heard the Crusoe men coming down the stairs behind him. Before he could think of flight they rushed upon him, and, although he resisted manfully, he was speedily brought to terms by a savage thrust in the ribs from Friday's oar, which made him double up like a jackknife; and, at the same moment, the governor and the rest of his men entered through the side door. In less time than it takes to tell it, Tom and Johnny changed places, and the former, boiling over with rage, would have been mean enough to revenge himself upon the helpless clerk if he had not been restrained by the chief.

"Hold on, cap'n," cried Sam, catching Tom's hand as it was about to descend, with savage force, upon the prisoner's face; "it aint fair to strike a man when he's down, an' we haint got no time to waste in nonsense, neither. Now, Harding, I reckon you'll stay there fur awhile. Come on, fellers."

The Crusoe men hurried back to their skiff, and in a few minutes more were pulling up the harbor as if nothing had happened. Friday sat in the bow with his boat-hook; Will Atkins and Jack Spaniard handled the oars; Sam managed the helm; and Tom thought over the events of the night, and enjoyed his anticipated triumph over the students. None of the band had any thing to

say about his adventure with Johnny Harding ; in fact, they soon forgot it, and thought only of the dangers attending the work they had yet to perform. The governor glanced at Tom's face a good many times while they were moving up the harbor, and was surprised that he did not discover some signs of fear. But that sentiment had no place in Tom's mind just then. He grew bolder and more reckless the nearer they approached to the Storm King. He did not even tremble ; his nerves were as firm as a rock, and his determination to attempt the destruction of the yacht was stronger than it had ever been before.

"Did n't I tell Harry Green, when he had me locked up in that state-room, that if he did not release me at once I would square yards with him some day ?" said Tom to himself. "I suppose he thinks I have forgotten all about it, but I'll show him that I never forget. The sight of that yacht in flames will amply repay me for all the misery she has caused me."

In ten minutes after leaving the pier the Crusoe men had arrived within sight of the Storm King. The governor raised his hand, and Atkins and Jack Spaniard became more cautious in their movements. They handled the oars so carefully, and sent the skiff along so quietly, that not a ripple was heard in the water. Nearer and nearer the pirate crew approached the devoted vessel, holding themselves in readiness to seek safety in instant flight, should occasion require it, and presently Friday fastened into the fore-chains with his boat-hook, and Tom

drew himself up and looked over the rail. He heard a few words of the story which one of the anchor-watch was relating to his companion, and could just discern the forms of the quartermaster and officer on watch, who paced the deck in blissful ignorance of the danger that menaced their vessel. Tom drew his breath more rapidly than usual, as he crawled noiselessly over the rail and across the deck, and when he crouched at the head of the ladder and listened to that conversation between the anchor-watch, which we have already recorded, his heart thumped against his ribs with a noise that frightened him. But, fortunately for the captain of the Crusoe band, the students believed him to be miles away at that moment, and, thinking that the noise that had attracted his attention was only imaginary, the young tar resumed his story, his companion settled into a comfortable position to listen, and Tom slipped down into the galley.

He was now in a dangerous situation. The ladder ran down between the galley and the forecastle, where slept half a dozen students, and if one of them should chance to awake while he was there his capture was certain. Tom thought of this, but if there had been no one within a hundred miles of him, he could not have gone about his work with more deliberation. He first looked for the kindling, which he had told Sam he should find under the stove. It was there, and the wood-box was filled also. He moved the wood-box under the shelves that supported the dishes, piled the kindling-wood around it, and then, pulling out his bottle, threw the coal-oil

upon it and upon the shelves and bulkhead. It was but the work of a moment more to light a match and apply it to the kindling, and in an instant the wood was in a blaze.

"I think these fellows will find out what sort of a boy I am now," chuckled the captain of the Crusoe band, as he made his way up the ladder. "This is the grandest idea I ever had, and I have carried it out, too. There'll be nothing left of the Storm King in fifteen minutes."

"Hallo! Boat—ship—I mean, man ahoy!" came the hail, breaking in upon his reverie, and scattering all his courage to the winds in an instant.

It was well for Tom that he was close to the rail, for, had he been discovered a few seconds sooner, his retreat would have been cut off, and he would have fallen into the hands of the students, who, in their rage, might have treated him very roughly. Hearing the footsteps of the watch close behind him, he threw himself headlong over the rail and landed on his hands and knees in the skiff, which, in a moment more, was flying down the harbor with the speed of the wind. He heard the anchor-watch pronounce his name. He knew when the officer of the deck came forward, and he would have been willing to give any thing he possessed could he have been in a position to see the lieutenant's face and hear what he had to say about it. He knew when the order was given to lower the jolly-boat, and distinctly heard the rattle calling the crew to quarters. On the whole, he was well satisfied with what he had done. He had caused a great

commotion among the students and thoroughly alarmed them, even if the fire he had kindled in the galley failed to destroy the yacht.

"You had better hurry up, governor," said Tom, with a calmness that astonished his companions. "That jolly-boat will be after us almost immediately."

"Give way, strong," commanded the chief. "Cap'n, there's my hand. I have put you down for a coward more'n once since I made your acquaintance, but I confess that I did n't know any thing about you."

Tom accepted the governor's hand, and proudly listened to the congratulations of the Crusoe men. He laughed when he thought how nicely and easily he had accomplished his work, snapped his fingers in the air, and acted altogether like one demented. He listened for the sounds of pursuit, and presently heard the measured dip of oars behind.

"The jolly-boat is coming, Sam," said he. "And there goes the fire-alarm," he added, as the yacht's bell began tolling rapidly. "They can't save her, for there's too much coal-oil in the galley. Now, men, listen to me. When we reach the vessel Xury will go to the wheel; Jack Spaniard will make the skiff fast to the stern; Friday will cast off the line; and Atkins and the governor will shove off. Be lively, now, for the sooner we get out of Newport the better it will be for us."

The Crusoe men were well aware of that fact, and Tom's orders being strictly carried out, the Sweepstakes was got under way very speedily. But, just as the wind

filled the sails, and she began to move through the water, Xury discovered their pursuers.

“Stand by, governor,” he exclaimed. “Here comes them spooneys.”

Sam looked over the stern and saw the jolly-boat swiftly approaching the schooner.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW IT RESULTED.



WHEN the crew of the Storm King saw the flames coming out of the fore-hatchway, and learned from the anchor watch that Tom Newcombe had turned up again, and that he had been on board the yacht, to carry out that "splendid idea" of which he had spoken, their amazement and indignation knew no bounds; and there was not one among them who would not willingly have given up all his chances for promotion, if he could have had that boy within reach of his arm for one minute. And when Midshipman Richardson, flying down the harbor in the jolly-boat, heard the fire-bell ring, and, looking over his shoulder, saw the smoke ascending from his vessel, he placed his hand on the cutlass which hung at his side, and told himself that, if he could only get one finger on the collar of Tom Newcombe's jacket, he would capture him or perish in the attempt. If Tom had only known it, he had, at last, succeeded in thoroughly arousing the students. They had thus far treated him much more leniently than he deserved—not out of any love for him, but because of their respect and affection for his father; but now they had one and all resolved that

he had done damage enough. He need not try to save himself by flight, for he could not do it. They would hunt him high and low, and they would find him, too ; and when they got their hands on him, they would see that he did not escape the consequences of his last act. Of course the students never said all this, for they were so busy that they did not have time to say any thing ; but they were as determined about it, and as certain of each other's assistance, as though they had talked the matter over, and already decided upon a general plan of action.

The first lieutenant had never in his life been more astonished and alarmed. That his evil genius should re-appear again so suddenly, when every body believed him to be miles away, and that he should have the audacity to board the vessel, and set fire to her under the very noses of the anchor-watch, when he knew that the chances were not one in ten that he could escape detection, was almost incredible. Harry could not understand it. It showed what a reckless, vindictive fellow Tom Newcombe was, and how determined he was, too, when he once made up his mind to any thing.

"You've reached the end of your rope, my hearty," were the first thoughts that passed through Harry's mind. "You've got to lead Crusoe life now, sure, for you can never return to this village." Then he stamped his foot on the deck, and looking impatiently down the harbor in the direction the jolly-boat had gone, exclaimed, aloud : "O, what shall I do ? That villain has tied my hands,

and I can't even pursue him. Richardson, if you know what you are about you will not let him escape you this time."

Having succeeded in working off a little of his surplus indignation, the lieutenant seemed, for the first time, to realize that the fire-bell was ringing in his ears, that his little vessel was being slowly consumed before his eyes, and that his men were looking to him for orders. He had stood inactive on his quarter-deck not more than a minute, and during that time the men had been filing up from below, bringing their hammocks, which they stowed away in the nettings with as much care and precision as though they had just been called up to their morning's duties, instead of midnight fire-quarters. As fast as they disposed of their beds, they sprang to their stations, and presently the first lieutenant saw before him twenty young tars, some at the pumps, others at the fire-buckets, ready to pass the water when the word was given, a couple with axes in their hands, the boatswain's mate holding the nozzle of the hose, and all awaiting his commands. Not a boy moved, and not an eye was turned from the first lieutenant, although the smoke began to rise in greater volume from the hatchway, showing that the fire was making rapid progress. Naval discipline had been strictly carried out, and Harry felt ashamed of himself when he reflected that he was the only one on board who had shown any signs of excitement.

"Fire in the galley!" shouted the lieutenant. "Break down on that pump! Pass up the water! Mr. Jackson,

close the main hatch, and every other opening except the door of the galley."

The sailors jumped at the word. The boatswain's mate dived through the smoke with the hose; the buckets began to fly along the lines; the boys at the pump came down manfully; and soon a furious hissing and steaming below told the first lieutenant that the water was pouring into the galley. Harry fumed inwardly because he could not go down and use a bucket with the others. But his place was on deck, where he could see all that was going on, and could be readily found by his officers, in case they had any thing important to report.

"I'm an unlucky fellow," said he, pacing nervously back and forth, and unconsciously making use of Tom Newcombe's favorite expression. "First, I was captured by a crew of pirates, who tried their best to sink me; I came near having my commission revoked because their leader escaped; and now I am set on fire! What could have possessed that fellow to come back here? Where has he been? What has he been doing? Where is he now? What is the prospect, Mr. Jackson?" he added, turning to the second lieutenant, who at that moment came up, all begrimed with smoke and dirt, and drenched with water.

"It is not very flattering, sir," was the reply. "The wind comes strong down the fore-hatch, and fans the flame."

"Shut the galley, and knock a hole through the door for the hose," said Harry, promptly. "If the fire con-

tinues to gain headway, we must cut into the deck to give the buckets a chance. What will become of us if we lose the vessel, Jackson?"

"We're not going to lose her, sir," replied the lieutenant; and Harry was greatly encouraged to hear him speak so confidently. "She will capture Tom Newcombe and his band of freebooters for us yet."

Jackson ran off to obey the orders of his superior, and the first lieutenant stopped the buckets (for, of course they could not be used when the galley door was closed), and waited impatiently for the next report. Up to this time he had been so engrossed with his work, that he could not have told whether he was alone in the harbor or not; but now he was reminded of the fact that there were vessels all around him, and found that the Storm King had suddenly become an object of interest to their crews. A yawl came alongside, and half a dozen men, armed with axes and buckets, sprang over the rail. They were led by an old, gray-headed sea captain, who, the moment he touched the deck, demanded in a voice that could have been heard above the roar of a hurricane: "Who's master of this craft?"

"I am in command, sir," replied the first lieutenant.

"You!" exclaimed the old sailor, looking first at Harry's uniform, and then toward the galley, taking in at one swift glance all the preparations that had been made for putting out the fire. "Well, what have you done, little marline-spike?"

"I've stopped the draft, and am throwing water on the fire as fast as I can."

"If you want any help say the word. I've got a boat's crew here. If you've no objections, I'll just step down and take a squint at things. Perhaps a few suggestions from an old fellow who has had two vessels burned under him in mid-ocean would n't come amiss."

"O, no, sir," replied Harry, gratefully. "I shall be glad to listen to your advice. It won't do to let this fire get started in the harbor."

"It would ruin me," replied the captain. "That's my vessel over there, and she is all I have in the world. If I lose her, I shall be high and dry aground."

Harry did not wonder that the old sailor felt uneasy. He was so nervous himself that he could not stand still, and he became appalled when he thought of the possible consequences of Tom Newcombe's attempt to carry out his "splendid idea." He had placed a million dollars' worth of property in jeopardy, and all to satisfy an unreasonable grudge against his father, the students, and the principal of the academy. If the fire he had kindled in the galley of the Storm King should spread to the shipping in front of Mr. Newcombe's elevator, Tom might be revenged in a way he had not thought of. He had promised to raise a breeze in the village, that would lead the people there to believe that they had never known any thing about him, and he had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations.

The uneasiness was not confined to the crews of the ves-

sels that were moored about the yacht—it began to spread through the town. Mr. Newcombe's night watchman, who had by this time been discovered and released, had found out that there was something unusual going on, and he was ringing the bell on the elevator, as if his life depended upon his arousing the village in the shortest possible space of time. Then the alarm bells, and the big bell at the academy joined in, the fire engines rattled through the streets, men began to run about the wharves, and in a few minutes all Newport was in commotion. Some thought the town was on fire; but the flames had thus far been confined to the galley of the Storm King, and, thanks to Harry and his crew, they were likely to remain there.

"What do you think of it, sir?" asked the first lieutenant, when the old sailor returned from the galley.

"O, it's all right. I could n't see much on account of the smoke; but there's no danger now if you keep the draft shut away from it."

Before Harry could reply, another yawl dashed up alongside the yacht, and a second party of sailors clambered over the side, headed by a burly, red-whiskered man, who seemed to be in a terrible rage about something.

"It beats the world what little sense some people have," said he, hurrying up to the old captain, who was standing beside Harry. "The idea of giving a lot of little brats like these full charge of a vessel! I've had my eye on this craft ever since I've been in port. I've

said a dozen times that she'd get us into trouble, sooner or later, and now my words are coming true. The whole harbor will be in a blaze in five minutes. Peters," he added, turning to one of his men, "kick those young sea-monkeys out of the way, and put out that fire."

Harry overheard the order, and so did Lieutenant Jackson, who at that moment came up to report that the fire was being rapidly subdued. The former was willing to take advice and to receive assistance, but he was not the one to submit to any domineering, and he regarded the order as a most unwarrantable interference, and, if the red-whiskered sea captain had been of his own age, it is probable that he would have heard something. But the first lieutenant, angry as he was, did not forget the respect due to those older than himself.

"Captain," said he, mildly, "the galley is full of water, and there is no necessity—"

"Shut up!" was the polite rejoinder. "Do you suppose that I am going to leave so dangerous a thing as fire to the management of a lot of little boys? Go down there, Peters."

"Mr. Jackson, you will allow no one to interfere with you," said Harry.

"Very good, sir," replied the lieutenant, who was in excellent fighting humor, like all the rest of the yacht's company. "I'll look for him."

Peters ran down the ladder to execute the orders of his captain. The first man he encountered was the boatswain's mate, who stood in front of the galley holding

the nozzle through a hole in the door, and directing the stream of water upon the fire inside.

"Come, now, get out o' this!" roared Peters, trying to push the young tar away from the door.

"Who are you? Get out o' this yourself," replied the boatswain's mate.

Peters, seeing that the boy was not disposed to be driven away from his work, proceeded to carry out his orders to the very letter. His first move was to fasten with both hands into the collar of the mate's jacket and send him sprawling on the deck; his second, to throw open the door that led into the galley. As the apartment had been flooded with water, and the fire nearly drowned out, this did not endanger the little vessel as it would have done a few minutes before, but the mate was none the less angry.

"Well, douse my to'-gallant top-lights," he growled, "Here's a go."

"Wheeler," shouted the second lieutenant, from the deck, "close that door at once."

"No words, now," said Peters, shaking his fist at Jackson, "or you'll go overboard."

"We'll see about that. Stand by here, men!"

The students swarmed around their officer, and Peters began to believe that he had stirred up a hornets' nest. "I was sent down here to put out this fire," said he. "Give me that nozzle."

"I was sent down here for that same purpose," replied the boatswain's mate, "and I won't give up

the hose. The fire is out, and now I am going to put you out."

As he spoke he turned the nozzle full in the face of the intruder, an action which caused him to toss up his heels and measure his length on the wet deck. When he recovered his feet he thought no more of the fire, but made the best of his way up the ladder, followed by a stream of water from the hose.

All these things happened in much less time than we have taken to describe them. It was probably not more than ten minutes from the time the first notes of the alarm were struck until the last spark of fire had been extinguished. In five minutes more the deck of the Storm King had been cleared of the sailors, her anchor slipped, and she was standing down the harbor under a full press of canvas.

As Captain Steele's military duties kept him ashore, Harry was virtually the commander of the yacht, and, having authority to act in all emergencies like the present, he was not delayed in his operations by being obliged to ask instructions of his superior. He did just what he knew the captain or the principal would have done, had either of them been there—he started in hot pursuit of the incendiary, and was fully resolved to capture him before he returned.

Every thing seemed to indicate that there were stirring times ahead. Sam Barton, although he had but a small force at his command, was cunning and reckless, and Harry was long-headed, fruitful in expedients, and

determined. He was simply working to effect the capture of the young rogue who had tried to destroy his vessel, while the governor and his band were fighting for liberty. The contest promised to be an exciting one.

"I have to report, sir, that the starboard watch is engaged in setting things to rights below, according to orders," said the second lieutenant, stepping up and saluting.

"Very good, sir," replied Harry. Then, dropping the officer, he inquired: "How does she look, Jack?"

"O, don't ask me. It makes me mad to think of it."

"Well," said Harry, taking a good survey of his friend, who was as wet and begrimed as a boy could be, "if she looks as bad as you do I don't want to see her."

"She does, and worse. Go down and look at her, Harry, and then tell me if you think any punishment too severe for that fellow. But don't this night's work beat you?"

"Beat is no name for it; I am taken all aback. If any one had told me that Tom Newcombe was as reckless as he has shown himself to be, I should have laughed at him. What do you suppose he intends to do? Where is he now?"

"I wish I could tell you. We must hunt him up, and when we have captured him we can find out all we want to know."

The second lieutenant went below to put on dry clothing, and Harry walked forward to take a look at things.

He found that ten minutes had made a great change in the appearance of his little vessel. The effects of the fire were visible on deck about the hatchway, and on the ladder that led below. The wood-work of the galley was charred and smoked; the furniture was scattered about over the floor and broken and battered; the stove was overturned; the water stood in little pools all over the floor, and, altogether, it presented so desolate an appearance that the lieutenant was sorry he had come down to look at it.

"She is n't much like the neat little vessel of which I have been so proud," soliloquized Harry, as he returned to the deck. "But I am thankful for one thing, and that is, her sailing qualities are not injured, and we can use them to bring that fellow to justice."

Then, turning to the officer of the deck, he instructed him to put two men on the forecastle with orders to keep a bright lookout for the jolly-boat, and also for a white skiff with a crew of half a dozen boys.

Meanwhile the jolly-boat flew down the harbor, propelled by two good oarsmen. Midshipman Richardson sat bolt upright in the stern sheets, examining each side of the harbor as well as he could through the darkness, and hoping it might be his good fortune to put "just one eye on that Tom Newcombe." He did not stop to consider that it was reported, by the anchor watch, that Tom was backed up by his old pirate crew, and that, if such was the case, he would have six desperate fellows to contend with. He cared nothing for the difference in

numbers. He had but two companions, but he was sure that, having justice on his side, he could overcome all obstacles.

"There's a boat right ahead, sir," said the bow oarsman. "I can hear it."

"So can I," replied Richardson. "Give way, strong. Remember, men, if we come up with Tom Newcombe I shall catch him and hold fast to him, and I want you to stand by to defend me with your cutlasses. Do you understand?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the answer.

"Whatever we do must be done quickly," continued the young officer. "We can't hope to capture his whole crew, nor beat them in a fair fight. Tom Newcombe is the man we want, and, if I can once get my hands on him I can hold him, if you will keep the others off. Bear in mind, men, that he set fire to our vessel."

There was no danger that the young tars would forget that, for the strokes of the little bell continued to ring in their ears, and, as they passed along, they could hear the watch on board the vessel talking with each other and making inquiries about the fire. Add to this the fact that they were trembling with anxiety for the safety of the yacht, and filled with apprehension lest Tom's new plan should prove successful, and there was no fear but that his crime would be kept in remembrance.

Richardson went the entire length of the harbor without seeing any signs of the Crusoe band. He could hear the boat just ahead of him, but he could not see it, for

it was concealed from him by the darkness; neither could he gain on it an inch, although his crew worked at the oars until the perspiration ran in streams down their faces. At length, however, the jolly-boat reached the end of the pier, and the midshipman suddenly discovered something that filled him with excitement. It was a small schooner, which was slowly moving out into the harbor. At her stern was moored a white skiff.

"There they are," whispered Richardson. "Give way strong."

"Hallo, here!" exclaimed a voice from the deck of the schooner. "Boat ahoy!"

The young officer made no reply. He grasped the tiller-ropes more firmly in his hands, and guided the jolly-boat under the stern of the schooner.

CHAPTER XIII.

CRUSOE AFLOAT AGAIN.



HE midshipman's desire to "get just one eye on that Tom Newcombe," was gratified now; for, as the jolly-boat rounded the stern of the schooner, and came alongside, he discovered the captain of the Crusoe band leaning over the rail. "O, now, you had better keep off, if you don't want to get into trouble," he drawled. "All hands stand-by, to repel boarders."

"Way enough!" commanded Richardson. "Board with a loud cheer."

"Down with the 'cademy swells!" cried the governor, rushing frantically to the side, followed by his men. "Pitch 'em overboard as fast as they come up!"

But that was much easier said than done. The boat's crew whipped out their cutlasses, and when the chief saw the bright blades flashing before their eyes, he drew back, and wished for the spears he and his band had used during the attack on the yacht. The Crusoe men all shrank away from the rail, for the actions of the students indicated that they were determined to board the schooner in spite of all opposition, and that they were quite as deter-

mined to use their weapons on the first one who came within their reach. A few flourishes of the cutlasses cleared the way for them, and before the governor could think twice, the young tars had gained a footing on the deck.

"Knock them down! Throw them overboard!" exclaimed Tom Newcombe, retreating with all possible haste toward the forecastle, closely followed by the students. "O, now, keep your hands off, Dave Richardson, or I'll get even with you, some day."

The midshipman, not in the least intimidated by the threat, held fast to Tom's collar, which he had seized with a vice-like grasp, and dragged him toward the jolly-boat with one hand, while, in the other, he carried his cutlass, which he kept whistling through the air in a way that made the Crusoe men give room with alacrity. Close at his heels followed the boat's crew, ready to resist any attempt that might be made to rescue their captive. Richardson hurried him across the deck, and the Crusoe men, astonished at the audacity of their assailants, and afraid to trust themselves within reach of the gleaming cutlasses, stood in a group on the forecastle, not knowing what to do. Tom struggled desperately for his freedom, sometimes planting his feet firmly on the deck, and pulling back with all his might; then trying to unclasp the strong fingers that were holding fast to his collar; but finding that his efforts were wholly in vain, he began to call lustily for assistance.

"Help! help!" he cried. "Lend a hand, can't you?"

Are you five fellows going to stand there and let three spooneys capture me?"

These words aroused the governor, who now, for the first time, seemed to realize the fact that his crew outnumbered that of the enemy, two to one, and that it would be a cowardly piece of business to allow them to make a prisoner of one of his men, before his very eyes, and without a single effort on his part to rescue him. Tom was the most valuable man in the band; and after assisting him through so many dangers, he could not afford to lose him now.

"Handspikes!" yelled the governor. "Down with the 'cademy swells! Knock 'em overboard!"

The Crusoe men rushed forward in a body, two of them armed with handspikes, two more with the oars that belonged to the skiff, and Friday flourishing his favorite weapon, the boat-hook. The midshipman began to get excited and uneasy, but never wavered in his determination to take Tom a prisoner to the Storm King. "Tumble into the boat, men," said he, hurriedly, "and stand by to catch this fellow."

The oarsmen leaped over the rail, without stopping to look before them, and, to their no small amazement, found themselves struggling in the water. In the hurry and excitement of the attack, they had not thought of making the painter of the jolly-boat fast, and she had drifted astern of the schooner, which had all this while been in motion. But an unexpected bath in the harbor was no new thing to them, and they were quite as ready to

carry on the fight in the water, as on the deck of the schooner.

“Pitch him over, sir,” said Simmonds, holding his cutlass in his teeth, and putting up his hands to receive the prisoner. “We’ll catch him.”

“O, now, I’d just like to see you do it,” drawled Tom, seizing the rail with both hands and holding on with a death grip. “I won’t stand no such treatment. Let me alone, Richardson!”

If Tom wanted to see himself thrown overboard, he was certainly accommodated; for the words were scarcely out of his mouth, when he flew through the air, and striking the water head-foremost, went down out of sight; and the midshipman, without waiting to see what had become of him, sprang over the rail, just in time to escape from the boat-hook, with which Friday attempted to catch him by the collar. This movement created a great commotion among the Crusoe men. They were astonished at the recklessness of the students, and feared that they were about to lose Tom after all. Like many others of their class, they had been accustomed to look upon a well-dressed, gentlemanly-appearing youth as an arrant coward. The term “spooney,” which the Night-hawks had used to designate a studious, well-behaved boy, meant, with Sam and his crowd, a fellow who had neither strength nor courage; but they had learned that the word, as applied to the students, was not exactly correct. They had discovered that good clothes, strong muscles, and reckless bravery go together sometimes; and that the crew of the

jolly-boat, although they were young gentlemen, were antagonists not to be despised. The governor stood for a moment, looking over the rail and watching the fight that was going on in the water—for Tom still kept up a furious resistance—and then called out:

“Xury, go to the wheel an’ throw the schooner up into the wind; an’ the rest of us man the skiff. Let go Tommy’s collar, spooney, or I’ll chuck this handspike at you!”

“Help! help!” roared Tom, who was being pulled through the water toward the jolly-boat. “Release me at once, Dave Richardson! Hit him, Sam.”

The chief made a desperate effort to strike the young officer, but the latter was just out of reach. Then Sam raised the handspike, and was about to throw it at the midshipman, but lowered it again, when he took a second look, and saw that he was likely to hit one as the other. He hurried off to assist his men who were hauling the skiff alongside, and then began a most exciting contest for the possession of the prisoner. Richardson’s object was to escape with him, and the governor’s to rescue him. The officer and one of his men held fast to Tom, and Simmonds, who was an excellent swimmer, struck out for the jolly-boat, hoping to return with her and pick up his companions before the Crusoe band could man the skiff. The governor saw and understood the move, and resolved to defeat it. If the students succeeded in getting Tom into their boat, Sam’s chances for recovering his man would be very slim indeed. “Hurry, fellers!” he exclaimed, excitedly. “Can’t you see what them spooneys are up to?

Man the oars, Will Atkins an' Jack Spaniard," he added, as his crew sprang into the skiff, "an' give way fur dear life."

Just as the skiff was shoved off from the schooner, Simmonds climbed into the jolly-boat, and catching up the oars, pulled swiftly to the assistance of his companions. He was nearer to them than the Crusoe men, but Atkins and Jack Spaniard were good oarsmen, and they came out ahead in the race. "Keep away from here, spooney!" exclaimed Friday, shaking his boat-hook at Simmonds, as the skiff dashed up to the struggling captain of the Crusoe band, "'taint safe to come no nearer."

"Now, then," cried the chief, seizing the midshipman by the collar, and plunging his head under the water, "I reckon you'll turn Tommy loose, won't you?"

The students, knowing that it was useless to contend longer against such heavy odds, released their prisoner, and dived out of sight to escape the savage blows which Atkins and Jack Spaniard aimed at them with the oars. Tom was dragged into the skiff by the governor, who ordered the band back to the schooner; and the midshipman, after being picked up by Simmonds, took his seat in the stern of the jolly-boat, and directed her course up the harbor. He had made a gallant attack upon a superior force of the enemy, and had succeeded in capturing one of them; but he had got the worst of the fight in the end, his prisoner had been rescued, and now the only thing he could do was to report the state of affairs to his superior officer.

"I am sorry that we are obliged to let them go," drawled Tom, as he sprang upon the deck of the schooner, and saw the jolly-boat disappearing in the darkness. "I'd like to have them prisoners long enough to pay them for the ducking they gave me. Friday, drop the skiff astern. Fill away, Xury, and hold for the head of the island. Atkins, are you sailor enough to loose those gaff topsails?"

"I reckon," was the reply.

"Well, go aloft, then, and do it. Governor, you and Jack Spaniard hoist the flying jib. We have need of all the rags we can spread, now."

In a few minutes every inch of canvas the Sweepstakes carried had been given to the breeze, and the little vessel boomed along over the waves at a terrific rate. The top-masts bent and cracked, the foam rolled away in great masses from under her bows, and now and then a fierce gust of wind would fill the sails, and the schooner would roll down until she seemed on the point of capsizing. Her captain, no longer the coward he was when he accompanied Mr. Graves on the trial trip of the Storm King, stood holding fast to the rail, and looking back toward the harbor. He knew that the fire-bells would soon arouse the town, that the news of the robbery and the destruction of the yacht would spread like wild-fire, and that the pursuit would not be long delayed. He wanted a good start in the race; and he would have spread all the canvas if the wind had been blowing a gale.

"We've got a long voyage to make, you know, skipper," said the chief, "an' we must be careful of our vessel."

"But when we are in danger we must get all that we can out of her," replied Tom. "Hold her to it, Xury, do n't luff an inch. If she can't stand this breeze, we've no business to go to sea in her. But I do n't discover any signs of the fire yet, do you Sam?"

"No, I do n't. Mebbe them swells have put it out."

"O, now, they have n't, either," drawled Tom, who could not be persuaded to believe that his "splendid idea" had failed, after all the trouble and danger he had incurred to make it successful. "They could n't put it out—there was too much coal-oil in the galley. She must be entirely consumed by this time; but, if I thought she was n't, I should be tempted to go back and try it again."

"There come them spooneys, cap'n," shouted Xury, from his place at the wheel.

Tom looked toward the village, and could just distinguish the dim outlines of a vessel which was coming out of the harbor, and appeared to be following in the schooner's wake. The thought that it was the Storm King had scarcely passed through his mind, when his mate continued:

"We've wasted a heap of good time in helping you carry out your idea. You had oughter done your work well, while you were at it. That's the sloop you tried to burn."

"O, now, you do n't know what you are talking about," drawled Tom.

"I reckon I do. I can tell the Storm King as fur as I can see her. Friday, bust open the door of the cabin, an' bring up the 'squire's spy-glass."

Friday went forward after a handspike, and Tom leaned his elbows on the rail and watched the approaching vessel. The thought that this last grand idea of his would share the fate of all his splendid schemes, had never once entered his head. He had been certain that it would prove successful—he did not see how it could be otherwise; but now he was convinced that it had failed, for he had examined the yacht so often and so closely, that he knew the exact shape of every sail and rope on her, and it did not require the aid of the 'squire's spy-glass to satisfy him that the vessel following in his wake was the one he had tried to destroy. He knew it was the Storm King. No other sloop of that size about the village could sail so swiftly, or ride the waves so gracefully. Even while he leaned over the rail, so filled with rage and disappointment that he could scarcely breathe, he could not help saying to himself, as he had done a hundred times before, that she was the prettiest object in the shape of a vessel that he had ever seen. And now to think that he must go away from Newport, and leave her in the hands of his rival! He would never have another opportunity to try any of his splendid ideas on her; and while he was wandering about the world, a fugitive from justice, Harry Green would remain in the village, surrounded with friends, beloved and respected by all who knew him, and, worse than all, first lieutenant of the Storm King. It was some time before the captain of the Crusoe band could realize all this; but when he did, he was so nearly beside himself that he would not have cared a grain if the schooner had foun-

dered at that moment, carrying all hands, himself included, to the bottom.

“O, now, did any body in this world ever see or hear of so unlucky a boy as I am?” yelled Tom, stamping his foot on the deck, and fairly trembling with anger. “I never can do any thing like other fellows, for something is forever happening to bother me. Another of my grand ideas has ended in smoke! The yacht is above water yet. I wish she would capsize. Go away with your spy-glass, Friday. What do I want with a spy-glass, when I know it is the Storm King?”

“What did I tell you, cap’n?” said Xury.

“O, now, I want you to hush up!” shouted Tom, placing his hands on the rail, and jumping up and down as if he were about to precipitate himself into the waves. “Do n’t speak to me; do n’t any body dare speak to me. I am a desperate man; and if you don’t look out, I’ll—I’ll—I’ve the greatest notion in the world to jump overboard.”

“There’s the yawl, an’ I can see them two bugglars standin’ by it,” said Atkins.

He addressed himself to the governor, not deeming it safe to speak to Tom, who showed an alarming disposition to break things. He had caught up a handspike, and was swinging it around his head, glaring fiercely at his companions as if he had half a mind to strike one of them; but, thinking better of it, he turned and brought the handspike down upon the rail with such force that the little vessel fairly trembled under the blow. The governor

stood off at a safe distance and looked at him, hoping that his rage would soon subside, and that he would give his attention to his duties. But Tom continued to beat the rail with the handspike, now and then stopping to look at the yacht, which seemed to be rapidly falling behind. "Be you gone clean crazy?" Sam ventured to ask, at length.

"No, I have n't!" shouted Tom. "I wish I had about twenty good men; I would board that yacht and make sure work of her. I'd cut a hole through her bottom, and I'd stay by her and watch her until she had sunk completely out of sight. Then I'd like to see Harry Green get her again."

"We've got to stop here fur the yawl an' them bugglars," suggested the chief.

"Well, get a crew ready to man the skiff," said Tom, throwing down the handspike after hitting the rail one more blow harder than all the rest. "You will take charge of the skiff, governor, and tow the yawl out to us. We'll make her fast alongside, and take the outfit aboard as we go along. Tell those robbers that if they want to sail with us, they can get into the skiff. Be in a hurry, now, for we have n't a single instant to lose."

When the skiff had been hauled alongside, the schooner was thrown up into the wind, and Sam and two of his men pulled for the island. Although they used all possible haste, a good deal of precious time was consumed in towing out the yawl; and when she had been brought alongside, and the Sweepstakes was ready to fill away again,

the Storm King was half way across the bay. During this time the schooner had made considerable lee-way, having drifted past the head of the island. This was something Tom had not calculated upon; and, so busy was he in brooding over his disappointment, that he did not notice it, until it was too late to prevent it. It had been his intention to run down the north shore, where he could get the full benefit of the breeze; but he was afraid to attempt it now, for the yacht was rapidly approaching, and, if he rounded the head of the island again, he would, of course, be obliged to sail directly toward her. This was something he did not like to do, for he was already as close to the sloop and her angry crew as he cared to be. The only course left him was to follow the south shore, which he did; and in a few minutes he had left the yacht out of sight behind the island.

“Let that skiff go adrift,” commanded the skipper, as soon as the schooner was fairly underway. “We can’t afford to have any dead weights dragging after us now. Governor, turn to with the rest of the hands and pass up the outfit. As we are in something of a hurry,” he added, turning to the robbers, “perhaps you gentlemen will lend us a hand.”

The “gentlemen” declared themselves willing to do any thing; and, with their assistance, the outfit was soon taken on board, and stowed away in the cabin; after which the yawl was also turned adrift, and the Sweepstakes, with nothing to retard her progress, bounded merrily on her way.

“Hurrah for us, skipper!” cried the governor, joyfully, “we’re off now. After three months hard work, we’ve got fairly started for our island. Who cares for them spooneys in the yacht? We’ve got a swift vessel, an’ we can show ’em a pretty pair of heels.”

The chief was as gay and jubilant as Tom was vexed and disappointed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PHANTOM SCHOONER.



THE governor was now as certain that he would see Crusoe's island as he was that he was at that moment standing on the deck of the Sweepstakes. What was there to prevent it? The worst obstacles in his way, the only ones, in fact, of which he had stood in fear, had been overcome. The schooner had been captured, the provisions secured, he had assisted Tom in his mad scheme for destroying the yacht, and made good his retreat, and now he was fairly out of the harbor with a swift vessel under his feet, propelled by a strong and favorable breeze, his pursuers a mile behind, and losing ground every moment. The prospect was certainly encouraging.

The chief had told Tom that the Sweepstakes could show the yacht a pretty pair of heels, and no doubt, in a fair trial of speed, she would have done so, for she was a much larger vessel than the sloop, and carried nearly twice as much canvas. But the governor forgot that the race is not always to the swift, and that the yacht had a decided advantage in being handled by a captain who understood his business. Harry Green was an excellent

sailor for a boy of his age, and he was backed up by a crew who had been his competitors at the examination, and consequently they were almost as well posted as he was, and quite competent to offer advice if he needed it, while Tom had no one to consult, his men being as ignorant as himself. The first lieutenant knew what the Sweepstakes could do in the way of sailing, and he was well aware of the fact that if he expected to capture the governor and his crew he must depend more upon strategy than upon the speed of his vessel.

By the time the fight between the midshipman and the Crusoe men was ended, the Storm King had been got under way and was standing down the harbor. The first lieutenant, having just come out of the galley, was thoughtfully pacing his quarter-deck, where he was presently joined by Jackson, who looked none the worse for his battle with the fire. Of course the exciting events of the night came up for discussion. The young officers expressed unbounded astonishment at Tom's audacity, and tried in vain to determine what new idea he had got into his head. They were completely in the dark, and there they remained until they picked up the jolly-boat and her crew, and midshipman Richardson, drenched in body and exceedingly uncomfortable in mind, came aft to report the failure of his attempt to capture the incendiary. He told his story in a few words, adding a piece of information that increased Harry's astonishment, and made him believe, with Johnny Harding, that wonders would never cease.

"I saw Mr. Newcombe's night watchman on the wharf as I was coming back, sir," said Richardson, "and from him I learned that Mr. Henry's safe has been blown open and robbed of seven thousand dollars. It was done by two strangers—professional burglars undoubtedly—and they were afterward joined by Sam Barton and his band of rascals, who carried off a quantity of provisions."

"Where was the watchman, that he did not give the alarm?" asked Harry.

"The robbers knocked him down, and bound and gagged him, before they went into the store," replied the midshipman. "They also made a prisoner of Johnny Harding, one of them holding a revolver to his head while the other tied him. But the funny part of the story is, that the governor is to receive a thousand dollars for taking the robbers to sea. Sam and Tom still have Crusoe's island on the brain, according to my way of thinking, and are starting off to hunt it up."

The first lieutenant was now satisfied of this fact himself. He dismissed the midshipman after listening to his story, and turned to consult with Jackson. "I wish that Tom had taken some other vessel," said he, after they had talked the matter over, "the Sweepstakes runs like lightning, and if she was in charge of a sailor, I should never expect to see her. My only hope is that Newcombe will commit some blunder. If he does, we've got him. He can't escape, for all the tugs in the harbor will be after him as soon as they can raise steam; but I wish it might be our good fortune to capture him,

alone and unaided. If we catch the whole band we'll recover the money, you know. Instruct the officer of the deck to have a bright lookout kept for the Sweepstakes."

Scarcely had this order been issued, when one of the lookouts, who had learned the particulars of the fight from the boat's crew, came aft to report that a schooner, which looked very much like the Sweepstakes, was standing across the bay toward the head of the island. The officer of the deck went forward to examine the vessel through his glass, and came back to Harry with the information that the pirate was in plain sight.

During the next quarter of an hour the first lieutenant stood on the forecastle, watching the movements of the schooner, and turning over in his mind various plans for her capture. When he saw her stop to pick up the yawl and the burglars, he called his crew to quarters, and made every preparation for boarding her. "If Tom knows any thing," said he to Jackson, "he will come back and go down on this side of the island; and if he tries that, we may be able to cut him off."

"But he's not going to try it, sir," said the second lieutenant, who was watching the schooner through his glass. "He is standing down the other side."

"Is he?" exclaimed Harry, eagerly; "so much the better. I was sure he could not take that vessel far, without making some mistake. We will go down on this side of the island and meet him. We shall reach the foot before he does, for he will have to go a long

distance out of his way to avoid the shoals. If we can only catch him in the narrows, between the foot of the island and the main shore, he is our prize. We'll board him, and have a regular hand-to-hand fight with him."

Harry, highly elated at the prospect of a conflict with the pirates, held on his course until the schooner was out of sight behind the trees on the island, and then put the *Storm King* before the wind, and stood down for the narrows. The crew all understood the meaning of this maneuver, and, although nothing was said to indicate the fact, Harry knew that they were intensely excited. He was quite as badly off as the rest in this respect, and it required the exercise of all his self-control to maintain his dignity. The first lieutenant thought the island must have grown immensely since he last sailed around it. The mile that lay between him and the narrows seemed to have lengthened into five. The yacht appeared to him to be on her bad behavior also, but that was only Harry's imagination, for she was doing splendidly, although she did not move more than half fast enough to suit her eager and impatient crew. The minutes flew by, and at last the *Storm King* rounded the foot of the island. A half a dozen glasses were instantly brought into requisition, and to the immense relief of the crew, nothing could be seen of the schooner. The yacht flew along the edge of the shoals, and in ten minutes more entered the narrows and shaped her course toward the head of the island.

"Now, here's the place," said the first lieutenant.

"If we meet him coming down we'll run up and board him before he can round to. Where is he, I wonder?"

The students were all on the watch, every eye being turned in the direction from which the pirate was expected to appear, and Harry nearly jumped from the deck when one of the crew sang out:

"Sail, ho! straight ahead, and coming down like the wind."

"It's the schooner!" exclaimed the lieutenant, in an excited voice.

"I believe it is," replied Harry, springing upon the rail to obtain a better view of the approaching craft. "Now I know it is. Station a man at the rattle, Mr. Jackson, and see that the crew are all in their places. I've got you now, Tom Newcombe!"

"Are you going to run him aboard, sir?"

"I am, indeed, if I get the chance."

"Humph! He seems to forget that there are two desperate villains on board that vessel, and that they are armed with revolvers," muttered the second lieutenant, under his breath. "We'll have a chance now to see how it feels to face loaded weapons."

Jackson thought his superior was becoming very reckless, but that did not prevent him from hurrying off to execute his commands. He sent another man to the wheel; stationed a midshipman in the waist to pass the first lieutenant's orders; placed one of the crew at the rattle; and collected the boarders in a group on the fore-castle. Harry, from his perch on the rail, watched all

that was going on, and, having seen the crew stationed to his satisfaction, he turned to look at the schooner. He found that if he had got Tom Newcombe, he was likely to lose him again, for the latter had kept his eyes open, and the moment he discovered the yacht he put his vessel about, and prepared to show Harry her heels. The maneuver was so clumsily executed, however, that the Storm King approached very near to her before she could fill away on her course again—so near that her bow was abreast of the schooner's waist, and only about ten feet from her. Every thing had worked as Harry thought it would if he met the pirate there, and he was sure of his prize.

"Hard a port," he shouted, so excited that he scarcely knew what he was about. "Stand by, Mr. Jackson."

"O, now, you had better mind what you are doing over there, Harry Green!" cried Tom, from the deck of the schooner. "You'll get the worst of it if you run foul of us."

"We're after you pirates," replied Harry, "and we're bound to have you. You had better surrender at once."

"Surrender!" repeated the governor, "not much we won't. We aint them kind of fellers. We're goin' to fight as long as a plank of this yere vessel stays above water. Mind that, spooneys."

The actions of the pirate crew fully confirmed the words of their chief. They rushed to the starboard side of the deck, flourishing handspikes, oars, and boat-hooks, evidently determined to make a desperate struggle for

their liberties, and among them Harry could see the two burglars, one of whom was holding fast to the valise that contained Mr. Henry's money. The young tars saw the war-like preparations, and they saw the robbers, too, and knew that they were more to be feared than all the Crusoe band. It was no boy's play to face revolvers in the hands of such characters, but not one of the crew would have hesitated an instant, had the order been given to board the schooner. They saw Tom Newcombe there, and they could not forget that he had tried to burn the Storm King. They crouched behind the rail like so many tigers, ready for a spring, grasping their cutlasses, pikes, and muskets, and waiting for Harry to lay the yacht alongside the pirate, when they would leap over the rail and capture every one of their enemies, or drive them into the bay.

"Port it is, sir," said the quartermaster, in response to Harry's order.

The yacht and the schooner were rushing through the water, side by side, like a couple of race horses on the home stretch, the pirate being about half a length ahead; but, when Harry's order was obeyed, the Storm King fell off and swung toward the schooner, and the first lieutenant expected every instant to see the two vessels come in contact. So certain was he that such would be the case, that he held fast to the shrouds, to avoid being knocked overboard by the shock, and had even opened his lips to shout: "Boarders away!" when the Sweepstakes drew rapidly ahead and bounded on her course.

leaving the yacht still swinging around as if she were about to start down the narrows again. A murmur of disappointment and indignation arose from the young tars on the forecastle, who looked first at their officer, and then at the rapidly receding schooner, as if they did not quite understand how she had escaped. Harry felt a good deal as did Tom Newcombe when he discovered the yacht coming out of the harbor, but he did not act as foolishly, by any means. He told the second lieutenant to come about and pursue the schooner, and then sprang down from the rail, saying:

“Did you ever see such luck? Did I make any mistake, Jackson?”

“No, indeed. You handled the yacht all right, but see, the pirate has longer legs than we have. Is n’t she a trotter? She can run away from us, and not half try.”

“I believe she can,” replied the first lieutenant, who felt considerably crest-fallen over his defeat, and did not care to say much. “We will keep as close as possible to Tom, and be ready to take advantage of his next mistake. He’ll be sure to make one presently.”

Harry stood on his quarter-deck watching the pirate, and not more than ten minutes elapsed before he began to think that he knew what he was talking about when he predicted that her skipper would soon commit another blunder. Both vessels had by this time passed the shoals—the Sweepstakes being so far ahead that Harry could but just make her out through the darkness; but, instead of holding up the harbor and keeping far enough

away from the bluffs to feel the full force of the wind, Tom rounded the shoals, and shaped the schooner's course toward the island. The first lieutenant was quite as much astonished as delighted at this apparent want of foresight on the part of the pirate captain, but he made no remark. He held on his way until the schooner was out of sight in the darkness, and then he tacked and ran toward the island.

"What do you think, Jackson," asked Harry, whose spirits were now as exalted as they had before been depressed; "hasn't he run into a nice trap? We've got him this time."

"Yes, he's caught easy enough now. He has no chance for escape that I can see. The shoals are on one side of him, and we all know that he can't cross them; the island is in front of him, and I am quite sure he can't get over that; we are behind him, and if he tries to come out we can cut him off. He's caught, sir."

Harry was certain of it. He ordered the crew to their stations once more, and went forward with his glass to watch for the schooner. The Storm King was headed toward the point where the shoals joined the island, and the first lieutenant was sure that when Tom became alarmed, and tried to run out, he could not pass by on either side without being discovered and cut off. He could not imagine what made him go in there. If he was trying to dodge the yacht, he was certainly going about it in a very awkward manner. A few minutes more passed, and Harry began to wonder why he did

not see the schooner. She could not go much farther in that direction without being dashed upon the shoals, and Tom must soon round to and come out, if he wished to save his vessel. The roar of the breakers grew louder and louder as the yacht approached them, and the waves dashed and foamed over the ledge, just as they had done when the Crusoe men braved their fury two hours before. They were now getting quite as close to them as some of the students cared to go. Even Jackson became a little uneasy, and, although like all the rest of the crew, he kept a bright lookout for the Sweepstakes, he now and then glanced anxiously toward the first lieutenant, who, perched upon the rail, was turning his glass in every direction, fully conscious of their dangerous proximity to the breakers, but more interested, just then, in the fate of the schooner than in any thing else.

"Look here, Mr. Jackson," he exclaimed suddenly, "Tom had better come out of that. He'll be cast away as sure as he is a foot high."

The second lieutenant thought it very probable that the Storm King would be cast away also, if her commander did not mind what he was about; but, like a good officer, he said nothing. He knew that Harry was a better sailor than he was—he must have been, or he would not have held a higher rank; that he was quite as deeply in love with the yacht as any of the crew, and that he would not willingly run her into any danger from which he could not extricate her. But still the breakers roared loudly and looked dangerous,

and the second lieutenant wished the vessel well away from them.

"What do you suppose Tom Newcombe is trying to do?" continued Harry, excitedly. "No boy with his senses about him would take a vessel like the Sweepstakes in there. Anyhow, we have the satisfaction of knowing that if he is n't wrecked he can't get away from us. He is penned up, cornered, caught. What shall we do with him when we capture him? Throw him overboard?"

The yacht was still bounding toward the shoals with all the speed that stiff breeze could give her, and just as Harry ceased speaking, the bluffs on the island loomed up through the darkness. The shore for two hundred yards was plainly visible, and anxious eyes examined it closely, but nothing could be seen of the schooner. The students were utterly bewildered. They looked at one another, then along the shore again, but not a sign of a sail could they discover. The pirate schooner had disappeared as completely as though she had never been in the harbor at all.

"Come about, Mr. Jackson," said Harry, as calmly as though the long line of foaming, hissing breakers before him had been a mile away, instead of almost under the vessel's bows. His mind was so fully engrossed with the mysterious disappearance of the schooner, that he could think of nothing else. Where could she have gone? was a question he asked himself more than once while the Storm King was coming about. She could

not have slipped by him, dark as it was, for there had been too many pairs of sharp eyes looking out for that. She could not have gone over the island, and she might as well have tried that as to attempt the passage of the shoals. She certainly had not been dashed in pieces on the rocks, for, in that case, he would have heard the noise of the collision and the cries of the crew, and, besides, he would have seen the wreck. Harry did not know what to make of it.


"Wheeler," said he, turning to the boatswain's mate, who happened to be standing near him, "what do you think of this?"

"Well, sir," replied the young tar, touching his cap and hitching up his trowsers, "I was just wondering if it *was* a schooner at all. She may be a small edition of the Flying Dutchman, sir,"

If Harry had been superstitious he would have thought so too. The schooner's disappearance was so mysterious, so sudden, so unexpected! Just at the moment when the crew of the Storm King were waiting for the order to board her, she had vanished, and no one could tell where she had gone. The first lieutenant knew many an old sailor who, had he been on board the yacht at that moment, would have solemnly affirmed that they had been pursuing a phantom.

CHAPTER XV.

TOM HAS ANOTHER IDEA.

“ES, sir,” repeated the governor of the Crusoe band, in a tone of great satisfaction, “we’re off fur our island at last. Them spooneys will never trouble you any more, cap’n. You’re safe from Johnny Harding, an’ I’m safe from Mr. Grimes, Bobby Jennings, an’ all the rest of ’em. Hurrah fur us!”

Tom stood leaning over the schooner’s rail, watching the Storm King, which was rapidly fading from his view, and thinking, not of Johnny Harding, but of the failure of his grand idea. He would not have been greatly disappointed if he had known that he should never see Crusoe’s island. He had, of course, expected that when he should be comfortably settled in some remote corner of the world, far away from all the troubles and vexations that had made his life in Newport so miserable, he would realize his idea of supreme felicity; but one element in his happiness was to be the satisfaction of knowing that he had carried out his threat, and “squared yards” with every body; that he had destroyed the Storm

King; that he had rendered the naval commission, in which Harry Green took so much pride and delight, perfectly useless to him, and that he had taken ample revenge upon his father and upon the principal of the military academy. With such thoughts as these to console him, Tom imagined that he would be perfectly content to pass the remainder of his days on some desert island, even in the company of such uncongenial fellows as Sam Barton and his men; but now he knew that could not be. His splendid scheme had failed. The yacht was still right side up, as swift and as handsome as ever, and as sound as a dollar, in spite of the charred and smoked wood-work in her galley. That was enough to banish all Tom's hopes of happiness. He could not enjoy a moment's peace of mind as long as the Storm King remained above water. He was a disappointed boy—an unlucky, ill-used, and unappreciated boy, too—whose life must henceforth be a desert and a blank. No more sport, no more enjoyment for him, and all because of that one unkind act of his father's.

This was the way the captain of the Crusoe band reasoned with himself as he leaned over the rail, gazing through the darkness toward the spot where he had last seen the yacht, and that was the way he would have told his story to any stranger who he thought would sympathize with him; but if such sensible fellows as Johnny Harding, Harry Green, and Bill Steele had been consulted, they would have shown Tom up in a different kind of light altogether. They would have cleared Mr.

Newcombe, and placed all the blame right where it belonged—upon Tom's own shoulders. They would have described the home and surroundings of this "Boy of Bad Habits"—this "ROLLING STONE"—who had gone from one thing to another in search of that which none of us find in this world—freedom from care and trouble—and would have proved that he ought to have been one of the happiest boys in Newport. They would have told that his sole object in life had been to avoid every thing that looked like work, and to establish himself in some easy, pleasant business, that would run along smoothly, without the least exertion on his part. They would have described him as a boy utterly wanting in firmness of purpose, except when he got one of his grand ideas into his head, and then he was as unreasonable and obstinate as a mule. They would have said that his numerous failures had not taught him wisdom, but had made him more determined; that he would not listen to any one's advice, and that he clung with bull-dog tenacity to his favorite belief that "nobody could teach him." And they would have come, at last, to the inevitable consequences of such a life as Tom had been leading, and told how he had been going down hill all this while, until he had at last got so low that no boy who had the least respect for himself could associate with him; that he was the leader of a band of rascals, the companion of burglars, a fugitive from justice, and one of the most miserable and despised of human beings. Tom could not help acknowledging to himself that such was his condi-

tion, but he clung to the idea that it was not his fault. His father was responsible for it all.

"If he had only given me that yacht, as he ought to have done," Tom had said to himself twenty times that night, "things would have been very different. I could have paid him back his four hundred dollars in a week or two, and after that every cent I earned would have been clear profit. But now—just look at me! I won't stand no such treatment from any body, and that's all about it."

"What's the row now, cap'n?" asked the governor.

"O, I was thinking about that yacht," drawled Tom.

"And, talkin' about her, too," returned Sam; "I heard what you said. This is a hard world, Tommy, that's a fact. The lucky ones go up, an' the onlucky ones go down. Life's nothing but luck, nohow."

"Well, if that's the case," whined Tom, "what is the use of a fellow's exerting himself at all? If it is his lot to go ahead in the world, he will, and if it is n't, he won't, and all the working and planning he can do will not better his condition in the least."

"Exactly! Sartinly! That's just my way of thinkin' to a dot; an' every thing goes to prove that I am right. Now, me an' you were born to be poor—to go down hill; an' your father was born to be rich—to go up hill. Have n't you tried hard to be somebody?"

"O, now, yes I have!"

"I know it. I never in my life saw a feller that tried harder, an' what's the reason you did n't succeed?"

'Cause you are onlucky. It aint your lot to go up hill. You might work an' scheme, an' try your level best, till you are as old as your grandfather, but it would n't do you no arthly good, whatsomever. Now, just look at your father! He's one of the lucky ones. Every thing he touches turns to money to onct. He need n't do no work if he do n't want to. He can set back on his easy 'chair an' read his paper, an' the cash comes pourin' in so fast that he has to hire a man to take care of it. Now, I ask, Why is it? It's his lot; that's the reason, an' he aint no better 'n I be, neither. Things aint fixed right, nohow, 'cordin' to my way of thinkin'."

Tom was not overburdened with common sense, but he was not foolish enough to believe in Sam Barton's doctrine. He knew that it is the industrious, prudent, and persevering who go up hill, and the lazy and worthless who go down. He knew that his father had made many a long voyage as a common sailor, and a good many more as captain, and worked hard for years with hand and brain before he could "set back in his easy chair" and read his newspaper during business hours. But he was quite ready to agree with the governor when he said that "things were not fixed right" in this world. Tom was quite sure they were fixed wrong. He had tried so hard, and had been so certain of success! If his plans had not all failed so miserably, he would have been a happy and prosperous trader, and the owner of the finest little sloop about the village, instead of a captain in the Crusoe band. He could not see that he had made any mistakes

in refusing to listen to the advice so often given him. The blame rested entirely with his father.

Tom was a very unhappy boy, and the only consolation he could find was in the thought that, by this night's work, he was severely punishing his father. Mr. Newcombe would, of course, hear all the particulars of the robbery, and of the attempted destruction of the yacht, and then he would regret that he had not paid more attention to his son's wishes. But it would be too late. The ill-used one would be miles at sea before morning, and he would never again return to Newport as long as he lived. Tom told himself that he was resolved upon that; but, after all, he did go back, and perhaps we shall see how he looked when he got there.

All this while the schooner had been bounding along the south shore of the island, headed toward the narrows. Xury was still at the wheel, Tom and the governor were standing at the head of the companion-ladder, the rest of the Crusoe men were gathered on the forecastle, and the robbers were leaning over the rail in the waist, looking down into the water, and conversing in low tones. The governor had been so busy since they came on board the schooner that he had scarcely spoken to them, but now he left Tom (who had again fallen into one of his meditative moods) to scrape an acquaintance with them. The burglars were so deeply engrossed in discussing their affairs that they did not hear the sound of Sam's footsteps, and he approached within a few feet of them without being discovered. So close was he to them, indeed,

that he could catch every word of their conversation. He had not thought of playing the part of eaves-dropper, but he found that they were talking about the thousand dollars they had promised to pay the Crusoe men for taking them to sea, and something that was said brought Sam to a stand-still.

"You were not in earnest when you made that offer, were you?" he heard one of the robbers ask.

"Yes, I was. I thought there were some men in the party, and that we could afford to pay them well for passage on board their vessel; but I see they are all boys, and we can give them the money or not, just as we please."

"It would be a foolish piece of business to throw away a thousand dollars, after coming so far, and working so hard for it."

"I know that, and I don't intend to do it. They seem to understand managing a vessel pretty well, and they may succeed in taking us to a place of safety. If they do, we'll step ashore and let them whistle for their money.

"But won't they make a fuss?"

"Who cares if they do? Haven't we both got revolvers?"

"Well, now, if this yere don't beat all the world," soliloquized the governor, who could scarcely believe that he had heard aright. He stood for a moment as motionless as if he had been nailed to the deck, looking the very picture of astonishment and alarm; then he shook

his head threateningly, moved quietly across to the other side, and settled into a comfortable position, to think the matter over.

Since the robbers made him that offer, the thousand dollars had never once been out of his mind. In his eyes it was an immense fortune, and he would have been willing to do almost any thing in his power to obtain possession of it. He already regarded the money as his own, and he had laid his plans for the disposal of it. He would not trust it in the hands of the treasurer of the band, but would take charge of it himself. He would invest a portion of it in weapons, fishing-tackle, clothing, powder, shot, and other articles they needed to complete their outfit, and with the remainder he would purchase provisions. He had never dreamed that the burglars would refuse to live up to their promise, but he had heard enough of their conversation to satisfy him that they would bear watching. Sam thought they were the meanest men he had ever heard of.

"I won't give up the money," said the governor, striking his fist upon the rail to give emphasis to his words; "that's just all about it. They promised to give it to me if I would take them out to sea, and they sha'n't go off this vessel till I have it in my hands. If they won't stick to their bargain, like men had oughter do, I must find some way to make 'em. Step this way a minute, skipper. What do you think them two bugglars are doin'?" he added, in a scarcely audible whisper, glancing toward his passengers, who were still leaning over

the rail. "They 're layin' their plans to swindle us out of our money!"

"No!" exclaimed Tom, who had also built his hopes high upon that thousand dollars, and could not bear the thought of losing it.

"It's a fact. I heard them talkin' about it."

"O, now, did any body ever hear of such luck?" drawled the captain, stamping his foot impatiently upon the deck, and twisting his mouth on one side as if he had half a mind to cry. "I don't see how I can stand another disappointment to-night. That money would have bought so many things we really need! What did they say, Sam?"

The governor repeated the conversation he had overheard as nearly as he could recall it, and when he had finished his story Tom thrust his hands into his pockets and thoughtfully paced the deck. Sam watched him closely, and when he saw the captain's face brighten up, and the scowl disappear from his forehead, his hopes rose again. "What is it, skipper?" he asked.

"I've got another idea," replied Tom, excitedly. "We want that money, don't we?"

"Of course we do, an' we're bound to have it, if we can get it. There ain't a single dollar in the treasury. I'd like to punish them fellers, too, fur bein' so mean as to think of cheatin' us."

"Well, we can do it," said Tom, mysteriously. "Sam," and here he approached the governor, and placed his lips close to his ear—"I can't see the use of being satisfied

with a thousand dollars when we can just as well have more."

"More!" echoed the governor; "more 'n a thousand dollars?"

"Don't talk so loud. We've got just as much right to the money in the valise as those robbers have; do n't you think so?"

"I reckon I do. It do n't belong to nary one of us."

"Well, let's take it."

"What! All of it—the whole five thousand dollars?"

"Yes, every cent of it."

The governor staggered back against the rail and looked at Tom without speaking. He had, by this time, become well acquainted with the captain, and when the latter declared that he had another idea, Sam was prepared to listen to something desperate, such as arming the band with the empty shot-guns, and demanding the passage money at their muzzles; but he had not dreamed that Tom would think seriously of attempting to deprive the burglars of their ill-gotten gains.

"If you want to punish them," continued the skipper, "I do n't know any better way."

"Nor me, neither," returned Sam. "But how can we do it? that's the question. We're only boys, an' they're men an' carry revolvers. I wish we had a few loads fur our guns."

"Just leave this thing to me, governor," replied Tom. "I can think it over in half an hour, and then I'll let you know what I have decided to do. You had better

tell the other fellows what has been going on, and ask them what they think of it."

As Tom said this he once more buried his hands in his pockets and began pacing the deck, and Sam ran off to repeat to the rest of the band the conversation he had overheard between the burglars, and to tell them what he and the captain had determined upon. The Crusoe men listened attentively, and it is hard to tell whether they were the more indignant at their passengers, or amazed at the audacity of their skipper. They spoke of the revolvers, and declared that, rather than face them, they would give up the thousand dollars.

"O, we aint goin' to fight the bugglars," said Sam, quickly. "Tommy an' me aint so foolish as to believe that six boys are a match fur two men with loaded pistols in their pockets. We're goin' to fool 'em, somehow. We'll either get the revolvers away from 'em, or study up a plan to get hold of the valise, without puttin' ourselves in the way of the shootin' irons. The matter is in the cap'n's hands, an' he is thinkin' it over now. We'll larn them fellers a thing or two before we are done with 'em."

The governor left his men to talk the matter over at their leisure, and walked toward the robbers, who had brought their consultation to a close, and seemed to be awaiting an opportunity to speak to him. "Look here, boy," said one of them, as Sam came up, "who are you, and where are you going?"

"Well, mister," replied the governor, "it's a long

story, but, if you want to hear it, I reckon I can tell it to you."

The passengers declared their willingness to listen, and Sam proceeded to give them a complete history of the Crusoe band from the day it was organized down to the time he met the robbers at Mr. Henry's store, describing their adventures in glowing language, and dwelling, with a good deal of pride, upon the exploits of this particular night. The men were no less astonished than every one else had been who had heard the story, and Sam could see that they were uneasy, too.

"So you really set fire to a vessel before you left the harbor, did you?" asked one.

"Sartin. We might as well have let it alone, howsomever, fur her crew put out the fire before it had a chance to do any damage, an' she is after us now. But that need n't scare you none, fur we are leavin' her behind fast."

"That makes no difference," replied the robber. "If she can't catch you, there are plenty of other vessels that can do it. You'll have the whole town after you before long, and we are in danger as long as we remain with you. We want you to set us ashore at once."

"How about our money?" asked Sam.

"What money?"

"Why, the thousand dollars you promised to pay us fur takin' you out to sea."

"O, you have n't earned that yet. We told you that you should have it when you had carried us safely out

of sight of Newport. That's something you can't do, and so you need not expect to receive the money. We can't give it to you for nothing, you know."

"Well, if this yere aint the very meanest piece of business I ever heard of," muttered the governor, as he turned on his heel and left the robbers. "But they aint by no means so smart as they think they are. We'll larn 'em how to cheat us. What's the trouble now?"

This question was addressed to the skipper, who was running about the deck in a high state of excitement, having just discovered the Storm King coming up the narrows. Although Tom was very much interested in his plot against the robbers, he had not forgotten the responsibilities resting upon him, and he had kept a bright lookout for their pursuers. He knew the yacht had gone down the other side of the island, and he was well aware of the fact that he ran some risk of being cut off, but he had great confidence in the speed of his vessel, and held on his course, hoping to beat the sloop in the race, and to pass through the narrows before she came in sight. But in this he was disappointed. The Storm King was directly in his path and coming toward him at a rate of speed that made the skipper of the pirate craft extremely nervous.

"I say, Tommy," cried Sam, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise, "there's them spooners again."

"O, now, am I blind?" drawled the captain. "Don't I see them as plainly as you do?"

"But how does it come that they are in front of us?"

That's what I want to know. I thought they were a mile behind by this time. We can make up our minds for a fight now, sartin."

"Why, they are boys," exclaimed one of the robbers. "We have nothing to fear from them."

"Now, do n't you fool yourself," replied the governor. "If they are boys, there's lots of 'em, and they've got muskets, pikes, an' cutlasses, an' they know how to use 'em, too. You'd better be gettin' them shootin' irons of your'n ready."

For a few minutes there was a great commotion on the deck of the Sweepstakes. The captain's orders were promptly obeyed, but the schooner came about very slowly, while the Storm King continued to approach at the top of her speed, and the governor could see that Harry was making preparations to come to close quarters. While the little vessels were rushing through the water, side by side, and so close together that an active boy could almost jump from one to the other, the excitement on board the Sweepstakes was intense, and it was increased when the yacht began to fall off and swing toward the schooner. The Crusoe men had no desire to face cold steel in the hands of twenty enraged students.

"All hands repel boarders," shouted the captain of the pirate craft, flourishing his handspike about his head. "Crowd her, Xury. Jack Spaniard, get an ax and stand by to cut us loose if they try to lash the yacht fast to us."

But we know that Harry did not succeed in his at-

tempt to lay his vessel alongside the pirate. Her superior sailing qualities enabled her to escape, and by the time the yacht was ready to fill away in pursuit, she was almost out of sight in the darkness. There was no exultation on the part of the officers of the *Crusoe* band, however. They had escaped from one danger, but they knew that there were others close at hand. It had been their desire to get into deep water with the least possible delay, but the yacht had sadly interfered with their plans. The Sweepstakes was fairly blockaded.

"I wish that sloop was at the bottom of the ocean," exclaimed Tom. "If we don't look out, Harry Green will get the better of us yet."

"Don't you think we could run by her?" asked the governor, anxiously.

"No, indeed. The schooner is very swift, but she could n't do that. We must go back to our harboring-place. It is n't safe to go around the island again, for those tugs have raised steam by this time, and, whatever we do, we must keep away from them. Perhaps if we run into the cove we can give Harry Green the slip. He will not know where we are, and if he goes off to hunt us up, we'll come out and start for our island again."

The governor did not like this plan. The cove was too near the village to be a safe hiding-place now, and as soon as the events of the night became generally known the harbor would be covered with vessels and tugs. But he could see no other way of escape, and he

finally went aft, and took his place at the wheel. The passengers stood in the waist, holding fast to the money, and watching all that was going on; but they had nothing to say until they heard the roar of the breakers, and discovered that the schooner was headed directly toward them. Then they wanted to know where the captain was going, and what he intended to do, but the reply they received did not convey to them the desired information. Tom could not forget that they had laid their plans to cheat the Crusoe band, and he thought that men who could go back from their word, as these intended to do, were not worth noticing. "You will please attend to your own business," said he.

"But this is our business, captain," protested one of the passengers. "We do n't want to be wrecked."

"Well, if you are afraid, you can get out and go afoot," said Tom. "I am master of this vessel, and if you will keep quiet, you will find out that I know what I am doing."

But the robbers' actions indicated that they did not feel disposed to keep quiet. They looked at the shoals, whispered together for a moment, and then one of them thrust his hand into his pocket, and, approaching Tom, said, savagely :

"Look here! We are not going in among those rocks. If you want to keep out of trouble —"

Just at that moment the Sweepstakes dashed into the channel that ran between the shoals and the bluffs on the island, and the burglar forgot what he was about to

say to Tom, and thought only of self-preservation. They both rushed frantically to the side, and while one of them held fast to the rail with one hand, and to the valise with the other, his companion hurriedly divested himself of his pea-jacket, and kicked off his boots, in preparation for his battle with the waves, which he seemed to believe was not far distant. The governor was uneasy also. He had never before attempted to take so large a vessel as the Sweepstakes through the channel, and he was by no means certain as to the result of his undertaking. But luck was still in his favor, and, after being tossed about on the angry waves for ten minutes—it seemed much longer to the trembling and excited Crusoe men—the schooner glided swiftly between the rocks at the entrance of the cove, and ran her bowsprit among the bushes that grew on the bank in front of the cabin. And while Harry Green and his crew were wondering at her mysterious disappearance, and telling one another that they had been pursuing a phantom, she lay snug and safe in the cove, and none the worse for her rough passage across the shoals.

“Well, I done it, did n’t I?” exclaimed the governor, triumphantly. “We’re safe from Harry Green now, an’ if it was n’t fur the fuss we had with them farmers, we could stay here fur a year, an’ nobody would be the wiser fur it. I’ll go an’ see how Jed is gettin’ along.”

Sam jumped ashore and ran toward the cabin, and Tom, after he had seen the schooner made fast to the bank, turned to the robbers and asked :

"What do you think of it now?"

"We think we have seen quite enough of you Crusoe men," was the reply. "We shall leave you. You can go your way and we'll go ours."

"You'll talk to the governor before you go, wont you?"

"The governor! What do we want to talk to him about?"

"Why, about that money—the thousand dollars, you know."

"Guess not," answered one of the robbers, with a laugh. "Good-by, captain."

"You are not gone yet," said Tom, to himself. "If I know any thing you will be glad to come to terms before you are ten minutes older." He waited until the burglars were out of sight, and then, calling his crew about him, continued: "Those fellows are trying to cheat us out of their passage money. They can't find their way out of the cove without a guide, and if they ask any information of you, send them to me or to the governor. If one of you says a word to them about that path, we'll tie you hand and foot, and leave you here on the island. We'll show them that we are quite as smart as they are."

At this moment the governor came running from the cabin, breathless and excited, and, clambering over the rail, stormed up and down the deck, swinging his arms about his head like the shafts of a wind-mill. "Fellers," he shouted, "we're done fur now. Our cake's all dough. Jed's gone!"

"Gone!" echoed all the Crusoe men, in concert.

"Yes, gone—sloped—mizzled—cleared out—and I can't find hide nor hair of him. We'll have all them farmers down on us now."


"Well, I wonder if any living man ever heard of such luck!" drawled Tom.

"Our jig is danced at last," snarled Will Atkins. "I knew all the whole time that we'd never see our island."

There was great excitement among the Crusoe men.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHNNY IS MISTAKEN FOR AN ENEMY.

 OHNNY HARDING was greatly discouraged by the result of his conflict with the Crusoe men. His victory had been turned into defeat; and while he was lying on his bed, bound hand and foot, the burglars were making good their retreat from the village. Every instant of time was precious; for, of course, the longer the pursuit was delayed, the more difficult would it become to effect the capture of the robbers. Johnny struggled desperately for his freedom, and shouted for help until he was too hoarse to speak; but the governor's own hands had tied the rope with which he was confined, and the only person within hearing of his calls was the watchman, who was as powerless as the clerk himself. It seemed to Johnny that he must have lain there three or four hours, although it was really not more than twenty minutes; and, during that time, the captain of the Crusoe band had made his unsuccessful attempt to destroy the yacht. Johnny heard the fire-bells, and wondered if a conflagration of the town was to be added to the excitements of the night.

There was not much sleeping done in Newport after

the big bell at the military academy added its voice to the universal din. Business men thought of their property on the wharf, and ran down to assure themselves of its safety. Mr. Newcombe and the grocer met in front of the elevator. The former stumbled over his watchman, who, strangely enough, had not been discovered by the Crusoe men, and Mr. Henry, somewhat surprised that the bells had not alarmed Johnny, pounded loudly upon the front door.

"Come in, whoever you are," cried the clerk.

"Get up, and open the door," replied the grocer. "Do n't you hear those bells? Is every thing right in there?"

"Not by a long way, sir. I've had visitors. You will have to come in at the side door."

Johnny knew that Mr. Henry was astonished, for he heard him talking to himself as he entered the passage. When he reached the side-door, and saw the hole that had been cut through it, he knew what had been going on as well as if his clerk had explained the matter to him. He lighted one of the lamps, and after glancing at the safe, and at the papers that were scattered about over the floor, he entered the office to look at Johnny. "I suppose they got it all?" said he, as he untied the ropes with which the prisoner was confined.

"If they, did n't it was their own fault. We are short about twenty-five dollars worth of provisions, also. Tom Newcombe and his pirate crew have turned up again, and have drawn on us for supplies."

Mr. Henry's astonishment increased as his clerk hurriedly recounted his adventures. The latter took particular pains to describe to his employer the intended movements of the robbers, as he had learned them from the captain of the *Crusoe* band, and, when he had finished his story, the grocer said he would ask Mr. Newcombe to send out his tugs. But Johnny was too impatient to wait for the tugs. It would be half an hour before they were ready to start, and there was no knowing what the robbers might do in that time. The clerk wanted to find them, and keep as close to them as possible; and something might happen that would put it in his power to recover the money. He knew that the grocer did not blame him for any thing that had happened—he would have been a most unreasonable man indeed, had he done so—but still Johnny felt that he was, to some extent, responsible for his employer's property, and that the only way to redeem himself, was to return the money to Mr. Henry with his own hands. He did not then decide upon any plan of action. His first hard work must be to find the robbers; and, when that had been done, he would be governed by circumstances. He left the grocer on the wharf talking to Mr. Newcombe, and ran to the end of the pier where he had seen a yawl moored the night before; but that was the one the robbers had taken at Sam Barton's suggestion, and it was then dancing about in the bay, having been turned adrift after serving the purpose of its villainous crew.

“I want a skiff,” said Johnny, to himself, “and I could

find plenty if I was only on the other side of the harbor. I'll have to swim over."

Johnny was a boy who never allowed himself to be daunted by any obstacles, and having made up his mind that he wanted a skiff, he was determined to secure one by some means or other. He was about to jump into the harbor and swim to the opposite side, when he happened to glance toward one of the vessels lying in front of the elevator, and saw a yawl moored at her stern. He could cross the harbor much more easily and quickly in a boat than by swimming, and he decided to borrow the yawl.

"Well, now, what do you want here?" demanded one of the watch, as Johnny leaped over the rail, and began to cast off the boat's painter.

"I want to use this yawl," replied the clerk. "I can't stop to explain, for I am in a great hurry."

"Avast there!" shouted the sailor. "If I get hold of you, I'll pitch you overboard."

But the watch did not get hold of Johnny, for by the time he reached the stern, the clerk was a boat's length from the vessel, and was sending the yawl rapidly across the harbor. He found a number of skiffs on the opposite side, and, selecting the one that suited him best, he hoisted the sail and filled away for the island. He had scarcely cleared the harbor when he discovered the Sweepstakes; but knowing that his skiff was no match for her in sailing, and being perfectly well aware of the fact that, even if he should overtake her, he could not recover the money

alone and unaided, he turned his boat's head toward the foot of the island. By this maneuver he would gain on the schooner nearly a mile and a half; and, when she came out of the narrows, he would follow her and keep her in sight until one of the tugs came up, when he would board her, and assist in securing the robbers. When he reached the foot of the island, the Sweepstakes was not in sight; and while he was waiting for her, he saw the Storm King dash up the narrows. Johnny was astonished to see her there at that time of night, and he was greatly encouraged. It was plain to him that Tom had been doing something to arouse the students, and the clerk was glad indeed that it was so. His only fear had been that the Crusoe men would succeed in getting out of the harbor, and making good their escape before the tugs could get ready to start in pursuit; but now he was satisfied that the chase would soon be over. He was sure that the yacht would capture the pirate, and he wished that he was on board to assist the students; and, being ignorant of the fact that Harry knew more about what had been going on than he hid, he wanted to tell him that there were two desperate characters on board the schooner, that they had robbed Mr. Henry's store of seven thousand dollars, and that they were armed with revolvers. He stood up in his skiff, and shouted at the top of his voice, to attract the attention of the students; but they were too far off to hear him. Then he filled away in pursuit of the yacht; but she ran away from him very easily, and finally disappeared in the darkness.

"The robbers will be caught, anyhow," soliloquized Johnny, "and it will make no great difference whether I am there or not. If the Sweepstakes comes down the narrows, Harry Green will cut her off; and if she goes around the head of the island, she will run against some of the tugs. Tom won't give up as long as he sees the least chance for escape, and if he finds that he is likely to be captured, he will desert his vessel and take to the woods. He can't go ashore with his schooner, on the main land, for the water is so shallow that, after his vessel grounded, he would have to swim about half a mile. Tom is too lazy to do that, and besides, if he were to attempt it, he might be picked up by the jolly-boat. His only chance will be to land on Block Island, and perhaps he will go back to that harboring place he told me about. That's the very idea!" added Johnny, excitedly, striking his knee with his clenched hand. "There is just where Tom will go if he is cornered. He will think that because he has lived there a week without being discovered, he can do it again."

As these thoughts passed through Johnny's mind he came about and started for the island. When he reached it he drew the bow of his skiff upon the beach, and, clambering up the cliff, ran toward the shoals. Little dreaming how near he was to the object of his search, he stopped within a few feet of the head of the path that led into the cove, and strained his eyes through the darkness, in the hope of discovering the Storm King or the schooner. But they were nowhere to be seen, and he was

about to start on again when his steps were arrested by a faint shout which seemed to come up from below. It was uttered by Jed, who, since the departure of the Crusoe band, had not ceased to call lustily for help. He had little hope, however, of bringing any one to his relief, for the roar of the breakers, although it would not have drowned the report of a cannon, as Sam Barton had declared, was still loud enough to render his being heard extremely doubtful. Johnny listened, and presently the shout was repeated. "There's certainly somebody down there," said he to himself, "and he seems to be in distress, too. Who knows but it may be one of the Crusoe men? If it is, he is just the fellow I am looking for."

As Johnny said this he walked along the cliff as near the edge as he dared to go, in the hope of finding some way to descend into the cove; but he did not long continue his search, for, as he was passing a thicket of bushes, a man suddenly sprang up and seized him by the collar.

"We've got you now, you young villain," said he, savagely, "and we'll take care to hold fast to you."

The first thought that passed through Johnny's mind was, that he had again fallen into the hands of the burglars; the second, that they could not manage him as easily as they had done before. He would fight as long as he was able to raise a finger. But the clerk did not have time to act on this resolution, for his assailant threw him down with as much ease as he had prostrated

Tom Newcombe in the store, and caught him by the throat, and, at the same instant, a second man appeared, who quickly confined his hands behind his back, and gagged him by forcing a handkerchief into his mouth. His captors handled him very roughly, and Johnny would have yelled with pain, but the gag and the strong grasp on his throat rendered it impossible for him to utter a sound.

Having satisfied themselves that their prisoner was securely tied, the men jerked him to his feet, and then Johnny got his first good look at them, and was astonished to discover that they were not the burglars. They were two young farmers, whom he had often seen in the village—the same who had captured Tom Newcombe a few hours before. They were searching for Jed, and when they saw Johnny prowling about the cove, they hastened to secure him, believing him to be one of the Crusoe men. The clerk knew there was a mistake somewhere, but the gag effectually prevented him from explaining matters. If he tried to free his hands, in order to remove the gag, the farmers would think he was endeavoring to escape, and they might treat him even more harshly than they had done before. The only thing he could do was to submit quietly, and make himself known to them at the first opportunity.

“You young rascal!” said Bill, shaking his fist in Johnny’s face.

“We’ll show you how to rob potato-patches and cut down cellar doors,” said Josh. “If you don’t pay for

this night's work, it will be because there is no law in the land."

The farmers grasped his arms, and Johnny walked submissively between them toward the house. He was satisfied, from what they had said, that the exciting events of the night had not been confined to the village. The people on the island had evidently come in for a share of the trouble, and Johnny, who was blessed with more than an ordinary amount of curiosity, wondered what had been going on, and grew angrier every moment, because he could not speak to his captors. He thought of the time he was wasting, too, and wished Josh and Bill had been a thousand miles from there before they attempted his capture.

Johnny was astonished at the sensation he created when he was led into the house. Every one present looked at him with curiosity, and wondered that so honest-looking a boy should belong to a band of young robbers. When he had taken the chair pointed out to him, Josh stationed himself near the door to prevent his escape, and Bill removed the gag. The rough treatment he had experienced had sadly ruffled his temper, and as soon as he was able to speak he looked fiercely at Bill, and exclaimed :

"I'd like to know what you are about !"

"Would ! Well, I can soon tell you," replied Bill. "You are one of those fellows who robbed our potato-patches, aint you ?"

"Do I look like a boy of that kind ?" demanded

Johnny, indignantly. "I never saw your potato-patch, and I do n't know that you have one."

"Now, just look a here," said Bill, "what's the use of telling that?"

"It's the truth," protested the prisoner. "My name is John Harding, and I am clerk in Mr. Henry's grocery store, which has just been robbed of seven thousand dollars. I was in pursuit of the burglars when you caught me. I am not in the habit of telling lies," he added, more angrily than ever, noticing that the young farmers smiled derisively as they listened to his story. "All you have to do is to go back to the beach with me, and I will soon convince you that I am not trying to deceive you."

"You want us to take you there, so that your friends can release you, I suppose," said Josh. "We gagged you to prevent you from giving the alarm."

"You need not have put yourselves to so much trouble, for I haven't a friend on the island. I came here alone. Let me loose, can't you? I don't want to be confined here like a felon."

The farmers had been so nicely outwitted by the Crusoe men that they were very suspicious, and, believing that Johnny's story had been invented for the occasion, they did not put the least faith in it. They had caught him prowling about in the vicinity of the potato-patch, and that, in their eyes, was evidence strong enough to condemn him. Johnny said every thing he could to induce them to believe that he was really what he repre-

sented himself to be. He told how the burglars had effected an entrance into the store, described the operation of blowing open the safe, and even mentioned the fact of having heard somebody shouting for help while he was standing on the cliff. Then the farmers, for the first time, became interested.

"Perhaps it's Jed," said Bill. "He is our brother," he added, in answer to an inquiring look from Johnny. "He went out with us after the fellows who cut down the cellar door, and he has n't come back yet. We had better go down there, for he may have fallen over the cliff."

"You will take me with you, will you not?" inquired Johnny.

"No, I guess not; we don't think it would be safe. You see, the way you fellows got those two prisoners out of the cellar makes us think we can't be too careful of you. We'll leave you here, and for fear that you might escape, or be rescued while we are gone, we'll take you up stairs and tie you fast to something."

Johnny protested loudly against this arrangement, but his words fell upon deaf ears, and he was obliged to submit to his captors, who conducted him into the garret and bound him to the chimney, which came up through the middle of the floor.

"There," said Josh, "I'd like to see your friends find you now. You'll be likely to stay here until we come back, unless you can pull the chimney down, and I don't think you are strong enough to do that."

Johnny was astonished at the care exhibited by the

farmers in providing for his safe-keeping, and it led him to the conclusion that Tom and his band had been doing something desperate. He was impatient to learn the full particulars of the robbery of the potato-patch, and the rescue of the prisoners, but he was much more anxious to regain his liberty, and continue the pursuit of the burglars. He did not doubt that the students would capture them, and, as that would be a big feather in their caps, Johnny wanted to assist in the work, in order that he also might enjoy the honors of the exploit.

Josh and Bill were gone fully half an hour, and during every moment of that time Johnny's impatience increased, until at last it seemed to him that he could not possibly endure his captivity an instant longer. Of course he tried hard to free himself, but his captors, remembering the prisoners who had escaped from the cellar, had taken especial pains to make his bonds secure, and Johnny finally abandoned his attempts in despair, and awaited his release with all the fortitude he could command. At last, to his immense relief, he heard footsteps on the porch, and after a few minutes' delay Josh and Bill came up the stairs, accompanied by Jed. They all seemed to be very angry about something, and if Johnny had known what Jed had experienced at the hands of the Crusoe men, he would not have been at all surprised thereat. When Jed's eyes rested on the prisoner, his countenance fell, and he seemed to be very much disappointed. He took the candle from Bill's hand, held it close to Johnny's face, examined his clothing, and finally

shook his head. "You 'll know me the next time you see me, won't you?" asked Johnny.

"Yes, and I would know you now, if I had ever seen you before. He don't belong to the crowd," he added, turning to his brothers. "I took a good look at every one of them, and I can't be mistaken. You had better let him go."

"I think so too," said the prisoner.

"It's lucky for you that you aint one of the robbers," continued Jed, shaking his head in a threatening manner, "for I had made up my mind to give you a good drubbing. Let's return to the cove and watch for them. Perhaps they will come back."

"Do you mean the Crusoe men?" asked Johnny. "I know they will come back. They are blockaded, and they can't get out of the bay."

Josh and Bill were quite ready to go back to the cove, but they were not willing to release their captive. They could not be made to believe that he was not in some way connected with those who had plundered their potato-patch, and Johnny began to think them the most unreasonable men he had seen for many a day. There was Jed, who had had some adventure with the Crusoe men, and who repeatedly affirmed that he had never met Johnny before, but still Josh and Bill would not be convinced. "You see," said the former, "it does not follow that you ain't one of the robbers because we did not see you with them. If you had nothing to do with what has been going on here for the last week, what were you

sneaking around the farm for? That's what I want to know."

"I was n't sneaking around at all," replied Johnny, impatiently. "I was going about my business openly and above board, and I did n't care who saw me. I was looking for the men who stole Mr. Henry's money."

"Now, that's a funny story, aint it? A boy like you would n't be in any hurry to put himself in the way of two robbers, armed with revolvers. We are going back to the cove, and we shall take you with us. The men folks are all out looking for Jed, and we are too sharp to leave you long in the house with nobody but women to watch you."

"Would n't it be a good plan to obtain a little more assistance?" asked Johnny. "If you will collect half a dozen men, you can capture every one of those fellows if they come back."

"That's just what we intend to do," replied Josh, "but I think we three can manage them, and watch you besides."

"But you forget the robbers."

Josh smiled and shrugged his shoulders, intimating very plainly that he was not yet prepared to believe that the robbers existed, only in Johnny's imagination. "If you will agree not to make any fuss we won't gag you," said he.

That was something gained, and Johnny readily gave the required promise. Although his hands were still bound behind his back, his captors seemed to be very

much afraid of him, and during the walk to the cove they kept a firm hold of his arms, and looked about them suspiciously, as if they every instant expected to be called upon to resist an attempt on the part of the Crusoe men to rescue their prisoner.

But Johnny *was* released; not by the governor and his band, however, but by the crew of the Storm King, and Josh and Bill never once thought of offering any resistance to them.

It did not take Harry Green long to come to some conclusion respecting the mysterious disappearance of the pirate vessel, and, after his conversation with the boatswain's mate, he astonished his second lieutenant with an order to call away a company of small-armed men. While the jolly-boat was being lowered, the plucky midshipman Richardson, who commanded the company, reported for orders, and was instructed to go ashore and explore every nook and corner of the bluffs on that side of the island. He left the vessel as fully determined to effect the capture of Tom Newcombe as he had been before, and, when the party from the farm-house came up, he had stopped with his company on the cliffs above the cove to reconnoiter. When he heard them approaching, he ordered his men to conceal themselves. Of course he was not sure that they were the ones he had been sent out to capture, but he argued, as did Josh and Bill in regard to Johnny, that if they were honest people they would not be roaming about the island at that time of night.

"Halt!" shouted Richardson, when the farmers, with

their prisoner, had advanced fairly within his ambush. "Close up around them, men, and punch the first one that tries to escape."

Bill and Josh were so astonished that they did not think of flight or resistance until it was too late. The young tars arose from their concealments on all sides of them, and they suddenly found themselves surrounded by a wall of gleaming bayonets, every one of which was held so close to them that the least forward or backward movement on their part would have brought them in contact with the cold steel.

"Well, look here! I swan to man!" said Jed, shrinking away from the bayonets in front of him, only to receive a slight prick from three or four behind.

"I say, fellows," stammered Bill, "you've made a mistake."

"Is that you, Richardson?" asked Johnny.

"Harding!" exclaimed the midshipman, excitedly, "and a prisoner, too. We've got the burglars. Put your hands above your heads," he added, sternly, addressing himself to Josh and Bill; "quick, or you'll feel the points of those bayonets."

"Hold on, Dave," cried Johnny, when he saw that the bayonets were drawn back for a thrust. "These men are not the robbers."

"They are not? How does it come, then, that you are a prisoner?" demanded the young officer.

"Untie my hands, somebody, and I'll tell you all about it."

"See here, fellows," exclaimed Jed, who seemed greatly annoyed by the close proximity of the muskets, "just turn them stickers the other way, will you?"

None of the young tars, however, paid the least attention to his words, and, indeed, he might as well have spoken to the wind; but Richardson heard the appeal, and, turning to Johnny, inquired:

"Are you sure these men are all right?"

"Certainly I am," was the reply.

"Fall back!" commanded the midshipman. The wall of bayonets was removed, and Jed was immensely relieved. The prisoner was quickly released, and in a few words told the story of his adventures. Bill and Josh were compelled to believe him now, and they apologized so freely that Johnny readily forgave them.

"I suppose it's all right," said the midshipman, "but, to tell the truth, I am disappointed. When I saw you a prisoner, Harding, I was sure that these men were the ones we were looking for. If they had been, we could have captured them easily enough, couldn't we? Now, what's to be done? I have ten good fellows with me, and if we can get Tom Newcombe and his band in as tight a place as we had you a minute ago, they won't stand much chance of escape."

A council of war was held on the spot, and, after Johnny had repeated the conversation he had had with Tom Newcombe in the store, Richardson was satisfied that he knew what had become of the Sweepstakes. He decided to go into the cove at once, and Jed volunteered

to act as guide. They would approach as close to the pirates as they could without giving the alarm, and then they would charge upon them and overpower them. The sailors would attack the robbers, and leave the Crusoe men to the care of Johnny and his three friends, all except Tom Newcombe, whom the midshipman regarded as his own especial property. When all the details of their plan had been discussed, Richardson gave the signal to Jed, who led the way down the path.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BATTLE AT THE BRIDGE.



THE governor and his band were certainly in a predicament. A half dozen tugs were, by this time cruising about the bay in all directions; the Storm King lay at the upper end of the shoals under the bluffs, her crew kept constantly at quarters, in readiness to board the Sweepstakes if she came out; and a strong force, under command of the midshipman, was preparing to assault the pirates in their hiding-place. Harry thought he had them surrounded; and there were few, indeed, among the Crusoe men who did not believe that their voyage was at an end. It is true they had a way of escape from the cove that the students knew nothing about—by the channel that ran across the lower end of the shoals—but who among them could promise that they would not meet a tug there when they went out? Even Tom, who was generally expert at finding his way out of difficulties, believed it was all over with the Crusoe band. He leaned against the rail and looked down into the water; the governor thoughtfully paced the deck, and the rest of the band stood in a group in the waist, watching the movements of their officers,

and waiting impatiently for them to make known their plans.

"Come, skipper," said Sam, at length, "why don't you wake up and talk to us?"

"O now, what shall I say?" drawled Tom. "I am the unluckiest boy in the whole world!"

"We've heard that a thousand times," said the governor, impatiently. "We're all of us unlucky, for the matter of that. But what shall we do? Are we goin' to give up?"

"No, we are not. We have had a good many adventures to-night. I don't believe that any other boys of our age ever came safely out of as many scrapes as we have been into, and now we are not going to allow ourselves to be cornered, like rats in an oat-bin. We must leave here at once,"

"I say, governor," suddenly exclaimed one of the robbers, who had made the circuit of the cove without finding any way of egress, "how do you get out of this hole?"

"We don't go out at all," replied the chief. "We stay in."

"We do not intend to remain here any longer. We have wasted time enough with you, and now we are going off on our own hook."

"Well, then, why don't you go?" drawled the skipper

"Because we can't find any way out of the cove."

"We don't want nothing more to do with you two fellers, whatsoever," said Sam. "Go off about your business."

"Now see here, boys, this thing has gone about far enough. We've had more than we want of this nonsense, and we'll teach you to give a civil answer to a civil question. We are going out, and one of you must show us the way," said the burglar; and, as he spoke, he came on board the schooner, and, striding up to Sam, seized him by the collar.

"Let me be!" roared the chief.

"Will you guide us to the top of the cliff?"

"Will you pay us the thousand dollars you promised us for taking you out to sea?" whined Tom. "If you go back from your word, you need not ask favors of us."

"You have not taken us to sea yet."

"That's because you have n't given us a chance. We can do it, and we will, too, if you will stay with us."

"Let go my collar, I say!" shouted Sam.

"Answer my question first," replied the robber.

"I do n't know nothing about a way to the top of the cliff. Stand by, here, fellers. Hit him with a handspike, somebody."

The Crusoe men began to bustle about in a state of intense excitement, and the other burglar leaped over the rail to assist his companion. There was a lively prospect for a fight, and, no doubt, if Tom Newcombe had not interposed, the deck of the pirate vessel would have been the scene of a desperate conflict. The governor and his men were very much enraged at their passengers, and were fully determined that they should not leave the cove until

they had kept their promise, in regard to the thousand dollars. Sam was a very stubborn fellow, and the robber would have found it a much more difficult task than he had bargained for to force the secret of the path from him. "It's no use, mister," said he, doggedly. "You may shake me as much as you please, but I just ain't a goin' to tell you what you want to know till I see the color of that money. You promised to give it to us, an' we're bound to have it. Punch him in the ribs with your boat-hook, Friday."

"O now, look here!" drawled the skipper. "I won't have any quarreling and fighting on a vessel I command. Stand back, Friday. Put away that handspike, Xury. If you are determined to leave us, I'll send a man to show you the way up the cliff."

"No you won't, neither!" shouted Sam, indignant at the proposition.

"But if I do," continued Tom, without noticing the interruption, "you won't gain any thing by it. On the contrary, you will find yourselves in ten times the danger you are in now; for the prisoner we had confined in that cabin has escaped, and of course he has alarmed every body on the island. We are going to sea again, immediately, and, if you will remain with us, and behave yourselves, we will take you to a place of safety. You ought to remember that we do n't want to be captured any more than you do."

"But you have got the whole village after you," said the burglar.

"Look here, mister, be you goin' to let go my collar?" asked Sam.

"It is by no means certain that every man in Newport is after *us*," said Tom. "Do n't you suppose there are some in pursuit of *you*? Your best plan would be to remain with us; and, if we succeed in getting out of the bay, we will land you on some island, out of reach of the police officers and the telegraph. If we find our escape cut off, we will run our vessel ashore and take to the woods."

The burglar seemed to be impressed with Tom's arguments, for he released the governor, and turned to consult with his companion; while Sam, who was utterly amazed at Tom, led him off on one side and inquired:

"Hain't you made a nice mess of it now? Do you intend to show them fellers the way up the cliff?"

"Of course I do."

"Well now, skipper," said the governor, doubling his fist, and shaking it in the air, "of all the mean things I ever knew you to do, this yere is the beat. Have you forgot that we want to pay them for tryin' to cheat us?"

"No, indeed," replied Tom, emphatically. "I am bound to carry out my new idea, and you have seen enough of me to-night to know that I mean what I say. We will guide them up the path as far as the chasm, and leave them. We'll tell them that we had a bridge across there, but it is gone; and that they'll have to get over the best way they can. In the meantime I will turn the schooner around, and, when I am ready to sail, I'll send you word;

and I'll wager my share of the thousand dollars that the robbers, rather than be left alone in the cove, will come with us."

"Humph!" grunted the chief. "You're trustin' a good deal to luck, 'pears to me. Mebbe that plan will work, an' mebbe it won't. If we lose our passage-money, we can thank you for it."

"What else can we do?" asked Tom. "It's the only way I know of to avoid a fight."

"Well, captain," said the burglar, who had thus far done the most of the talking, and who answered to the name of Sanders, "we've concluded that we had better go. You can send a man to show us up the path."

"All right," replied Tom. "You have acted very meanly toward us, and you may have the satisfaction of knowing that you take with you our best wishes for your speedy capture. Governor, you and Atkins guide them up the path, and the rest of us stand by to get the vessel under-way."

Sam thought that the skipper, in spite of his assertions to the contrary, had either given up all hopes of carrying his new idea into execution, or else, that the disappointment he had experienced in the failure of his plans against the yacht, had turned his brain. This new scheme of his for avoiding a fight with the robbers, the governor regarded as a sure method of throwing away their last chance for obtaining possession of the passage-money. If the burglars left the cove, the Crusoe men would never see them again, and the only thing that

would prevent them from so doing, was the difficulty of bridging the chasm; and that could be easily overcome.

"Good-by to them thousand dollars," growled the governor, as he lighted his lantern and led the way toward the path. "I'd a heap sooner have a fight with the bugglars, than let them off so easy. They can build a bridge in five minutes."

There were other obstacles, however, besides the building of the bridge, that stood in the way of the robbers leaving the cove, that neither Sam nor Tom knew any thing about; but the former discovered them the instant he came in sight of the chasm. He stopped, astonished at the scene before him.

When Josh and Bill went into the cove to release Jed, they had built a bridge of saplings, by the aid of which the storming party was about to invade the governor's stronghold. Midshipman Richardson was half-way across the bridge, and Johnny Harding, who had armed himself with a heavy club, was preparing to follow the young officer as soon as he was safely over. Behind Johnny stood the young tars, leaning on their muskets, one of them holding a powerful dark lantern, which rendered objects in the vicinity of the bridge as plainly visible as though it had been broad daylight. The chief saw and comprehended, and a smile of exultation lighted up his face, but speedily gave way to an expression of alarm. There was some satisfaction in knowing that the robbers could not leave the cove, and that he and his band might yet have an opportunity to secure the valise and its con-

tents; but there was little to be found in the knowledge of the fact that he was on the point of being attacked by a force that outnumbered his two to one. Sam recognized the midshipman, and knew instinctively that something was going to happen. The fight in the harbor had taught him that the young officer was an unpleasant fellow to have about.

"Ah, Mr. Barton, we're glad to see you," said Richardson, when he had recovered from his surprise. "You are just the man we are looking for. You may consider yourself a prisoner—you and your villainous companions there. Your harboring place is completely surrounded, and you will save yourselves trouble if you surrender at once."

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Will Atkins, looking about him, as if seeking some avenue of escape. As he did so, his eyes rested on the pile of stones which he and Jack Spaniard had collected to defend their breastwork against the assaults of the governor, and a bright idea struck him. "Sam," he whispered, "let's heave them rocks at him, an' drive him back, an' then throw down the bridge."

The chief was prompt to act upon the suggestion. He and Atkins sprang behind the breastwork, and, before the midshipman could make up his mind what they were going to do, the stones were flying about him in a perfect shower. It would have been utter folly to stand longer upon the bridge in that exposed position, and, without waiting for a second volley, the officer turned and took to his heels.

"Hurrah for Governor Barton and the Crusoe men," shouted Sam. "You need n't talk to us about surrenderin', 'cause we ain't them kind of fellers, as I told you once before to-night. Chuck the bridge into the gully, Atkins."

If the chief imagined that he had disposed of the attacking party, he soon discovered his mistake. They were by no means defeated simply because their commanding officer had been driven from his position on the bridge. They had come there to capture the pirates, and they knew that two of them carried revolvers in their pockets. If the knowledge of that fact was not enough to turn them from their purpose, they were not likely to be frightened away by such missiles as Sam and his man had discharged at them. They were sharp enough to know that the bridge was the key to the enemy's position, and that much depended upon their ability to prevent Atkins from carrying out the governor's order. Stones were plenty on their side of the chasm, and there was also nearly half a bushel of potatoes left of those Sam had used against the mutineers. They were prompt to follow the example set them by the enemy, and, when Will Atkins ran forward to throw the bridge into the chasm, the order to halt, which he disregarded, was enforced by a volley of stones and potatoes that made the path in the vicinity of the bridge so uncomfortable that the Crusoe man was glad to retreat.

"Go on," thundered the governor. "That bridge must come down."

"Well, you can throw it down yourself," retorted Atkins. "I ain't in no hurry to be hit by them taters an' rocks."

"Keep away from that bridge," said the midshipman. "Harding, if you and your three friends will act as artillery-men, we'll charge across and capture those fellows—the Crusoe men, I mean. Of course we can't arrest the robbers unless we can take some advantage of them; but we can keep them in here until we can send word to Mr. Grimes, and I don't think they will dare use their revolvers on him. If they find that they are fairly cornered, they won't have the courage to resist an officer of the law."

"But how can we keep them in?" asked Bill.

"Easy enough. If they attempt to come across the bridge we'll pepper them with stones. If they return to their vessel, and go out the other way, we can't help it. That's Harry Green's business. Simmonds," he added, "go down and report to the first lieutenant that we have found the pirates, that the robbers are with them, and that we are preparing to attack them."

The midshipman was almost on the point of adding: "And tell him that he had better send for re-enforcements and keep a bright lookout for the Sweepstakes, for she may try to run by him;" but he did not say it, for he knew that it was no part of his business to instruct his superior officer. Harry was smart enough to attend to all such matters, and Richardson was sure that he would neglect no precautions to insure the capture of all the schooner's crew.

"Now," continued the young officer, when Simmonds had started off to obey the order, "open fire on them, and drive them into the bushes, so that they can't throw at us."

Although Richardson spoke in a tone so low that the governor could not catch his words, he knew what he was saying, and saw the necessity of making some arrangements to offer a decided resistance to the advance of the students. "Atkins," he whispered, "go down an' bring up the rest of the fellers. That bridge must come away from there, or them spooneys will be down on us like a hawk on a June bug."

"Suppose we point our revolvers at them," said Sanders.

"What good will that do? They ain't easy scared, an' they know you wouldn't dare to shoot them as well as you know it yourself. What I am afraid of is, that they will send off after more help. We must get out of here to onct, but we must throw that bridge down first, or they will catch us before we can get our vessel under-way."

Scarcely had Sam ceased speaking when the artillery-men opened fire on him, and he and his companions were driven to the shelter of the bushes; but not until a potato, thrown by Jed, his former prisoner, had smashed his lantern and extinguished the light. The bull's-eye of the dark lantern was turned full upon the place where he had taken refuge, and, although the artillery-men could not see him, they kept up a continuous shower of missiles, hoping to confine him so closely in his conceal-

ment that he could not return the fire. In this they thought they were successful, for not a single stone was thrown from Sam Barton's side of the chasm; and the midshipman, believing that he had retreated to his vessel, gave the order to advance, and led the way upon the bridge. The governor, however, had never once thought of retreating. He was still in a position to defend the cove, and, moreover, he had been re-enforced by Tom Newcombe and the rest of the band. While the fire from the artillery-men was the hottest, the Crusoe men and their allies had been quietly collecting ammunition and patiently awaiting an opportunity to use it. The burglars worked as hard as the rest, and Sanders, little dreaming how closely his movements were watched by all the members of the band, hid his valise in the bushes, and stood with his arms full of stones, ready to fire upon the young tars when they came in sight. This did not escape the notice of Sam Barton, who mentally resolved that, the instant the bridge was thrown into the chasm, he would catch up the valise and run for the vessel. He and his men were well enough acquainted with the path to travel it rapidly in the dark, and they might, perhaps, succeed in getting the Sweepstakes under-way before the burglars could reach her. This plan he communicated in a whisper to Tom, who declared himself strongly in favor of it, and watched his opportunity to reveal it to the other members of the band. The Crusoe men were all intensely excited, and heartily enjoyed their anticipated triumph over the robbers.

The governor and his companions, who dared not show so much as the tops of their hats above the bushes, could not see what was going on among the students, but they had a plain view of about half the bridge, and when the attacking party appeared they opened so hot a fire upon it that the advance was speedily checked, the column thrown into confusion, and the young tars, after expending all the ammunition they had brought with them, in the vain attempt to dislodge the enemy, retreated precipitately to the shelter of the trees on the opposite side of the chasm.

"Now's your time, governor," exclaimed Sanders, who entered as heartily into the work, and was as much interested in what was going on, as though he had been a boy himself; "rush out and throw down the bridge."

"Well, now, if you are in such a hurry to see that bridge come down, you had better rush out there yourself," replied Sam. "I can't see any sense in a feller's puttin' himself in the way of gettin' his head broke."

"We whipped 'em, didn't we?" said Xury.

"O yes, we did, but what good will it do?" drawled the captain. "They'll keep on charging us as long as that bridge is there. All they want is to employ us here till daylight, and by that time we must be out of the bay, or we can just consider ourselves captured. I've got another idea," he added, suddenly. "Mr. Mate, send a man to the vessel after a rope."

"Will Atkins," said Xury, "go down and fetch up a rope."

“Will Atkins! Will Atkins!” repeated the owner of that name, angrily. “It’s always Will Atkins, if there is any thing to be done. Aint there nobody in this band that can do nothing besides Will Atkins?”

“Go on, now, an’ bring up that rope, an’ quit your growlin’,” commanded the governor, sternly.

Atkins sullenly started down the path, grumbling to himself as he went, and vowing vengeance against the officers of the band. The mutinous spirit in him was as strong as ever, and only awaited a favorable opportunity to break forth again in open opposition to the governor’s authority. He spent a good deal of time in searching for the rope, and, before he returned to the chasm, the Crusoe men had successfully resisted another attempt, on the part of the students, to charge across the bridge.

“How are things in the village?” asked the governor, as Atkins spitefully threw the rope down in front of Tom. “Did you see Mr. Henry?”

“I hain’t been near the village for two hours,” replied the discontented member.

“Well, you might have been there and back two or three times, since you went away. I concluded you could n’t find a rope on board the vessel, and had gone over to Mr. Henry’s store for one.”

Some sharp words passed between the governor and his man, and while the conversation was going on, Tom completed his arrangements for carrying out his new idea, which were very simple. He coiled the rope on the ground so that it would run out rapidly, and to one end

of it fastened a heavy stone. "I understand it all, now," said the chief. "That bridge is bound to come down. Be ready to run, fellers, the minute I grab the valise," he added, in a whisper.

Tom's first attempt to remove the bridge was successful. He threw the stone over it, hauled in on the rope, and in a moment more the saplings were lying at the bottom of the chasm. The yell of indignation which arose from the students, mingled with the triumphant shouts of the Crusoe men.

"That's the way to do it," cried Sanders. "We are all right now. I say! Hold on, there, boy!" he continued, in quite a different tone of voice, when he saw the governor, with the valise in his hand, disappear around the bend in the path, closely followed by his men. "What do you mean? Stop, I tell you."

The burglars looked as though they thought it was not all right with them after all. They stood for an instant irresolute, and then started in hot pursuit of the Crusoe men, dashing recklessly down the slippery path, apparently all unconscious of the fact that a single misstep would precipitate them upon the rocks forty feet below. They reached the cove in safety, having made such good use of their time that, when the governor sprang over the schooner's rail, they were close at his heels. Sam was astonished, and highly enraged, but accepted the situation as gracefully as he could. Seeing that his plan for "getting even" with the robbers had failed, he placed the valise against the rail, and said, innocently:

"There's your money, mister. Cap'n, get under-way, to onct."

Sanders looked sharply at the governor. He had nothing to say, but he resolved that as long as he remained on board the Sweepstakes, he would never for an instant release his hold upon the valise. He believed the chief had some designs upon it.

"I reckon you'll stay with us now, won't you?" asked Sam.

"We must, I suppose," replied Sanders. "What are you going to do? Do you intend to cross the breakers again?"

"Sartin; there aint no other way to get out of the cove."

The actions of the burglars very plainly indicated that they did not like the idea of again attempting the passage of the shoals; and Sam himself would have been very glad indeed if there had been some less dangerous avenue of escape open to them. He could not forget the rock on the outer edge of the breakers, nor the risk he had run there a few hours before. Every thing being ready for the start, he went to the wheel, the line with which the schooner was made fast to the bank was cast off, and she moved slowly out of the cove. The skipper stationed two men at the fore and main sheets, placed Xury in the waist to pass orders, and then took his stand beside the governor. The latter would have stoutly denied that he felt the least nervousness or timidity, but his compressed lips and trembling hands told a different story. All the

Crusoe men were more or less alarmed, with the exception of the mate, who was as careless and indifferent as ever. Nothing seemed to disturb him. He stood leaning against the rail, whistling a lively tune, his hands in his pockets, and his eyes fastened on the rock at the opposite side of the shoals. He never moved a muscle when a huge wave carried the schooner almost over the ledge, and, when the order was given to haul in the sheets, he repeated it with as much calmness as he would have exhibited had the Sweepstakes been in smooth water, and running before a favorable breeze. The passage was safely accomplished, much to the relief of every one on board; and again the Crusoe men told themselves that they had dared the fury of the shoals for the last time.

Where was the Storm King all this while? She was still lying at the upper end of the breakers, waiting for the Sweepstakes. Her commander did not know there were two channels that led across the shoals.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ROBBERS ARE PUNISHED.



TO say that Tom Newcombe was delighted to find himself once more out of the cove and safely across the shoals, would but feebly express his feelings. He had never expected to see the bay again except as a prisoner. While he was in the cove and besieged by the students, he would willingly have disposed of his interest in the Crusoe band, and freely surrendered his share of the passage money, if he could have wiped out the record of that night. He had not seen a single hour's peace since he joined Sam Barton's society. He had constantly been in some trouble or other. It would have been well enough with him, he thought, if the governor had not turned up again—Tom had a great habit of laying the responsibility of his misdeeds upon other shoulders than his own—and he had more than once wished that the spar which had brought Sam into the harbor had drifted the other way, and carried him out to sea, and that he had been picked up by some vessel and taken to China or some other remote quarter of the globe. In short, when the captain of the Crusoe band found that his voyage was in danger of be-

ing brought to a speedy termination, he had been very hard on the governor, and had felt disposed to look on the dark side of things; but now that he was once more bounding over the waves of the bay before a fine breeze, and with not a tug or sailing vessel in sight, his spirits rose again. He was once more ready to believe that the expedition might prove successful. After bringing himself safely out of all the difficulties he had been in that night, it would be singular indeed if he could not find some way to overcome the obstacles yet before him. There was no immediate danger to be apprehended from the students. Harry Green had been outwitted, and with proper precautions their other pursuers might also be avoided. He sent Xury to relieve the governor at the wheel, and ordered him to hold the schooner directly across the bay toward the main land. His plan was to run as close to the shore as the depth of the water would permit. It was dark in the shadow of the bluffs, and if there were any tugs between him and the entrance to the bay, he hoped to run by them unnoticed.

Now that the danger attending the crossing of the shoals was passed, the Crusoe men could think about other matters. Tom and the governor, after exulting over their escape, pondered upon the failure of their plan for obtaining possession of the valise, and Atkins nursed his wrath against the officers of the band. The mutineer no longer desired the success of the expedition. All he cared for was to insure his own safety, and to be revenged upon the governor, Tom, and Xury.

"We'll never see Crusoe's island nohow," said he, to himself. "Tommy aint sailor enough to take us through a bay twenty-five miles long, with tugs runnin' up an' down it all the time lookin' fur us. We're bound to be ketched sooner or later. But just s'pose we do find our island! What fun will I see livin' there? It'll be Atkins, Atkins, all the whole time. 'Atkins will have to do every thing, and them lazy officers will sit around in the shade an' see me work. I aint a going to be a servant fur nobody, an' the best thing I can do is to leave the band. Jack Spaniard, come here."

The governor was well enough acquainted with Atkins to know that, after what had transpired at the bridge, it was best to keep a close watch over him. When he saw him standing sullen and alone on the forecastle, he knew that he was brooding over his wrongs, and, when Jack Spaniard joined him, Sam was sure there was mischief brewing. He saw them engage in a whispered consultation, and, when he could stand it no longer, he walked up to them, and laid a hand upon the shoulder of each.

"See here, my hearties," said he, "what's goin' on? It looks mighty suspicious to see your two heads so close together. Be you studyin' up another mutiny? If you are, you can bear two things in mind: One is, that you will come out at the little end of the horn, just as you did before. The other, that you won't get off so easy, by no means."

"We aint quite so foolish," replied Atkins. "What could me an' Jack do ag'in you four fellers? We were

talkin' about that money, an' we've thought up a way to get it. Mebbe it won't work, but there's no harm in tryin' it, you know."

The governor listened attentively while Atkins unfolded his plan, and said it contained some suggestions that were well worth listening to. The discontented member did not, however, tell all that he and his companion had been talking about. He kept back some things which, had he repeated them to the chief, would have brought him into trouble immediately.

Sam went aft to consult with Tom, and presently the schooner's bow veered around until it pointed toward one of the numerous islands that lay near the middle of the bay. In reply to a question from Sanders, Tom said:

"We're going to land. It isn't safe to continue our cruise at present, for it is nearly daylight. There is a creek on Deer Island, and we think it best to conceal ourselves there until night."

The governor and his men kept a bright lookout while they were running across the bay toward the island, but none of their pursuers were in sight, and, after coasting along the shore for a short distance, the Sweepstakes entered the creek of which Tom had spoken. Half an hour afterward she was snugly hidden in the bushes that grew in the water along the edge of the bank, and her crew were stretched out on the deck, sleeping soundly, after their night of excitement and adventure—all except Will Atkins, who had been ordered to keep awake and watch for the enemy. This was another injustice that

the mutineer declared he would not submit to. Was n't he as sleepy as the others? and was there no one in the band except himself who could stand watch? Because Tom, Sam, and Xury were officers, was it any reason why they should shirk their share of the work? Atkins could not see that it was, and he told himself that he was about to do something that would make ample amends for all he had endured at their hands.

But keeping a lookout for their pursuers was not the only duty Atkins was expected to perform. He had a difficult and dangerous task to accomplish, and one that he would rather had fallen to the lot of some other member of the band. While he paced up and down the deck he thought more of the passengers and their money than he did of the tugs that might at any moment come steaming up the creek. The robbers lay upon the fore-castle, Sanders with the valise under his head for a pillow, and both of them were snoring loudly. Atkins was sure they were sound asleep, but he was too wary to ruin his plans by being in too great a hurry. He allowed an hour to pass before he made any attempt to secure the valise—that was the extra duty he was expected to perform—and then he went about his work very cautiously. With a step that would not have awakened a cricket, he crossed the deck and took his stand beside the rail, within easy reach of the robbers. After assuring himself that there was no sham about their sleep, he placed his foot against the valise and began pushing it from under Sanders's head. Slowly

and cautiously was the movement executed, Atkins scarcely daring to breathe the while, lest it should arouse the robber, and, at last, he had the satisfaction of seeing Sanders's head roll down upon the deck. Quick as a flash Atkins's foot came back beside the other, and if the burglar had awakened then he would have seen him leaning over the rail, gazing into the bushes ahead of the vessel, and looking as innocent as a boy of that kind could look. But Sanders was not aroused. Wearied with his night's work, he still snored lustily, and Atkins congratulated himself on having accomplished the most dangerous part of his undertaking.

The next step was to arouse the band. He did not touch the valise again, but left it lying on the deck and crept to the place where the governor was sleeping. "Sam," he whispered, "it's all right. I've got the money."

"No!" exclaimed the governor, starting up and rubbing his eyes. "Where is it?"

"I left it layin' close to him, so that if he wakes up before we are ready to start he will think that his head rolled off of its own accord."

"You're a brick," said the governor, approvingly. "This 'most makes me forget that you were a mutineer. Call the other fellers an' we'll be off."

Atkins was on the point of obeying this order when, to the intense chagrin of both the Crusoe men, Sanders awoke with a start, and, raising himself on his elbow, looked about him. Seeing the governor on his feet he inquired :

"What's going on there?"

"Nothing," replied Sam, "only I must take my turn standin' watch now."

The robber raised a pair of very sleepy-looking eyes toward the clouds, remarked that it was pretty near daylight, and then, pulling the valise under his head, went off into the land of dreams again.

"Did you ever see such luck?" growled Atkins. "The whole thing must be done over again."

"Well, you can do it, can't you?" asked Sam.

"I reckon I could, but I just aint a goin' to try. You told me to get the valise out from under his head an' call you, an' I done it. 'Taint my fault that he woke up. If you want any thing more done you can do it yourself."

"I guess I am as good a hand at that kind of business as you are," said the chief. "Let's call up the other fellers, so that if I get the valise we can start to onct."

The Crusoe men were quietly aroused, but still remained stretched out on the deck, watching the governor, and ready to move when he gave the word. He approached the robber with more fear and trembling than he had ever before exhibited in the presence of the members of the band, for he could not help thinking of what would be done to him if the burglar should chance to awake and find him meddling with his pillow. Sanders had had nothing to say when Sam ran away with his valise in the cove, but he had looked very savage, and

the governor did not care to be caught in the act of robbing him. He was a long time at his work, but finally the burglar's head rolled down on the deck again, and Sam hastily picked up the valise and joined his companions. They followed him to the stern, let themselves silently down into the water, and swam after the governor, who, holding his prize above his head with one hand, struck out for the farthest shore with the other. They all cast frequent and anxious glances over their shoulders, and made their way through the water with all the speed they could command, expecting every instant to hear the bullets from the burglars' revolvers whistling about their ears. But nothing of the kind happened. Sanders and his companion slept on, all unconscious of their loss, and the Crusoe men crossed the creek in safety and disappeared among the bushes that lined the bank. Tom Newcombe's idea had been successfully carried out, and Atkins was the one who had suggested the way.

The governor and his band would perhaps have been astonished to know that, while they were revenging themselves upon the robbers, they were playing into the hands of one of their pursuers. But it turned out that such was the fact; and if Johnny Harding, who was at that moment standing on the deck of the Storm King, disappointed and utterly disheartened, could have received intelligence of what had just transpired on the deck of the pirate vessel, he would have danced for joy. Johnny was not one who made loud boasts of what he intended to do. He possessed quite as much courage as the

majority of his fellows, but he did not deny that he was afraid of the robbers. He even confessed that if he should overtake them he would be at a loss to know how to recover the money. But there was no one in the Crusoe band that he was afraid of, and if he had known that his employer's property was in possession of the governor, he would have been certain of success.

"We're even with them fellers now," said the chief, as he and his men concealed themselves in a thicket of bushes, from which they could watch the schooner without being observed themselves. "We'll larn 'em how to swindle us. Five thousand dollars! That's a heap of money, aint it, fellers?"

(The Crusoe men did not know how much money they had in their possession. Sanders had told them that there were five thousand dollars in the safe, and they imagined that was the amount in the valise. Had they known that it was more than seven thousand dollars, their excitement, which was already intense, would have known no bounds.)

"I 'most wish we had let it be," continued the governor, who became frightened when he fully realized what he had done. "Let's hide it somewhere."

"What for?" demanded the skipper.

"Why, 'cause. We can't never use it all, an' s'pose we should be ketched."

"O, now, we are not going to be caught," replied Tom, impatiently. "The tugs will never come in here after us, for it is too near the village. Every body will think

that we have kept on out to sea. Our prospects were never brighter than they are at this moment. I am just as certain that we shall see the island as I am that my clothes are wringing wet from my swim across the creek. We need a better outfit, and how are we going to get it with no funds in the treasury? We've got the money now, and we might as well use it. We have as much right to it as those robbers."

"That's what I say," said Atkins. "I am treasurer of the band, so I'll take charge of the cash. Just pass the valise over this way, governor."

"Now, you hold your breath till I give you the valise, won't you?" said the chief. "If you are treasurer, I'm governor, an' I won't ask nobody to help me take care of this money. I'll just hang on to it myself."

Atkins had been in excellent spirits during the last few minutes, but now he resumed his usual scowl, and looked as sullen and ugly as ever. His under-jaw dropped down, and his face lengthened out wonderfully. He had plans of his own that he was awaiting a favorable opportunity to carry into execution, and the governor's determination to hold fast to the money sadly interfered with them. He looked at Jack Spaniard, and Jack looked at him, and it was plain that neither of them were pleased with the arrangement.

"Aha!" exclaimed the governor, "I know what you fellers are winkin' an' blinkin' about. Do you diskiver any thing green in this yere eye? I can see through a ladder as fur as any body."

"Why, what's the row, governor?" asked Jack Spaniard, innocently.

"There's something up—that's the row," replied Sam, "an' you know it as well as I do. You'd best walk turkey from this time on, you two fellers, or I'll be down on you when you aint lookin' fur it."

"I think this is a purty how-de-do," growled Atkins. "What's the use of havin' any treasurer, if the governor is goin' to take charge of the cash?"

"There aint no use at all in havin' one—not such a one as we've got. You've good cheek, Atkins. You tried to ruin the expedition by gettin' up a mutiny, an' now you're thinkin' how to steal this money from us, you an' Jack Spaniard are, an' yet you have the impudence to ask me to let you take charge of it. Of all the things that have happened in the band since I got to be governor, this yere is the beat."

The two mutineers listened to this speech in amazement and alarm. It was all true, especially that portion of it which related to the plan they had in view for making off with the valise; but how did it come that the governor knew any thing about it? They were quite sure that neither of them had spoken a word to him or to any body else on the subject, and they were equally certain that no one had overheard any conversation between them. They opened their eyes, puffed out their cheeks, and looked at the governor and at each other as if they could not understand the matter.

"O, I knew you would deny it," said Sam, "but you

need n't, 'cause I am sartin it's so. We've wasted time enough in jawin' now, an', as we've got to stay here all day, we might as well go to sleep. Xury, you can stand watch fur two hours. Keep your eyes on the schooner, an' call us if you hear any fuss."

The Crusoe men had resorted to the expedient of deserting their vessel in order to get rid of the robbers. It was a part of Atkins's plan. Sanders, when he awoke and discovered that his money was gone, would, of course, begin an immediate pursuit of the Crusoe band. He would not look for them in the vicinity of the vessel and on that side of the creek, but, believing that it would be their desire to get as far away with their plunder as the limits of the island would permit, he would most likely search the woods along the beach. The burglars could not go all over the island in one day's time, and there was little probability that they would discover the governor's hiding-place. He and his men would remain concealed in the bushes until dark, and then they would board their vessel and put out to sea, leaving the burglars, as they had intended to leave the Crusoe men—whistling for their money. Thus far the plan had worked smoothly, and the loyal members of the band were highly elated. The only question that troubled them was: Might not the robbers, suspecting the trick that had been played upon them, watch the vessel and capture them as they went on board? That was something that time only could determine.

Never before had the governor laid his head on a pil-

low worth so much money. It was not an easy one, but Sam had, of late, been accustomed to hard beds and hard pillows, and he slept soundly in spite of the new responsibilities resting upon him. The captain and Friday also soon forgot their troubles, but there was no sleep for the mutineers. They sat gazing sullenly at the governor and at Xury, who, if one might judge by his looks, had suddenly begun to sympathize with them in their rebellious mood. He appeared to be angry, and muttered something about being compelled to stand watch when he was so sleepy. He kept his eyes fastened upon the mutineers, who seemed to be rendered very uneasy by his scrutiny, and Jack Spaniard finally demanded:

"Did the governor tell you to watch us as well as the money?"

"Now, who told you that I was watching you?" asked Xury. "There aint no law in this band that hinders me from looking at you, is there? But you need n't be so short with me. I never done nothing to you that I know of."

"Did n't you help the governor capture us?"

"Yes, an' I would do it agin. You broke your promise by desertin' me an' the cap'n while we were in trouble, an' if you had been in my place you would have done just as I did. But this case is different."

Atkins and Jack Spaniard began to prick up their ears. The hint contained in the mate's last words, slight as it was, led them to believe that he also was becoming dissatisfied and was ready to join with them against the

governor. But they were in no hurry to commit themselves.

"We do n't understand you," said Jack Spaniard.

"No, I reckon not," replied the mate, with a laugh. "You an' Atkins were not layin' plans to steal this money, were you? I know you were, but I hain't got nothing to say ag'in it. If you will let me come in with you, mebbe the job can be done a good deal easier. The governor suspects you, an' you can't wink your eye without his knowin' all about it. But he thinks I am all right, an' I can get my hands on the money at any time. O, you need not be afraid to trust me," he added, earnestly, seeing that Atkins and his companion exchanged significant glances, and in various other ways indicated that they were suspicious of him. "I know that we are bound to be captured if we stay on board the Sweepstakes, an' I am goin' to desert her. But I do n't want to go without any money, an', as I have as much right to the five thousand dollars as the governor has, I'm goin' to take it. I heard the cap'n say that we would stop at one of the Elizabeth Islands to take on a supply of water. If we do, I shall watch my chance, an' the first thing the governor knows I'll be missin', an' so will the money. If you want to go with me, all right; if you do n't, you can stay behind an' be servants fur them two lazy officers. Them's my sentiments."

This was the beginning of a long conversation. Atkins and Jack Spaniard would have been glad of Xury's assistance, for they knew that they would be so closely

watched that it would be an exceedingly difficult matter for them to secure possession of the valise, but the mate could pick it up at any time, and without exciting the governor's suspicions. They could not forget, however, that Xury had exhibited a great deal of zeal during the attack on their breastworks. He had always been loyal to the chief, and they were surprised to hear him talk of deserting, and afraid to trust him. But he seemed to be thoroughly in earnest, and Atkins finally acknowledged that he and Jack Spaniard had made up their minds to leave the band at the first good opportunity, and that they intended to take the money with them. They compelled Xury to make all sorts of promises that he would never betray them, and the latter, to show that he meant all he said, agreed to do the dangerous part of the work himself. They could remain in the back-ground, and, if he was detected, he would take all the blame and all the consequences upon himself.

By the time the details of their plan had been discussed Xury thought his two hours had nearly expired, and he aroused the governor with a request that he would appoint his relief. Tom Newcombe, much to his disgust, was the one selected. He grumbled loudly—as all the Crusoe men did when called upon to act contrary to their own wishes—but no one paid the least attention to him. The governor re-arranged his pillow, and was settling himself into a comfortable position to finish his nap, when an exclamation from Xury brought him to a sitting posture. The sound of hurrying footsteps and angry

voices was heard on the deck of the schooner. Sanders had discovered that his money was gone. The Crusoe men crouched lower in the bushes, and listened intently to catch the words of the robbers' conversation. They heard all that was said, and blessed their lucky stars that there was a wide creek between them and the enraged men.

"Do n't they take on, though!" whispered the governor. "I would n't be on board the Sweepstakes now fur nothing. We'd better do some good runnin' if they get after us, fur they're mad enough to use them revolvers."

At this moment the attention of the Crusoe men was drawn from the schooner by a sound that greatly increased their excitement—the measured dip of oars. They looked down the creek and saw the jolly-boat approaching.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARMY AND NAVY.



HARRY GREEN was greatly encouraged by the report Simmonds brought him concerning the state of affairs in the cove. The Crusoe men were surrounded, and, although he and his crew might not be able to capture them, protected as they were by the burglars' revolvers, they could at least keep them in the cove until the arrival of re-enforcements. He sent Simmonds back to the midshipman with a few orders, and after instructing the second lieutenant to have the jolly-boat called away, he ran down into his cabin and dashed off two short notes, containing, in a condensed form, the report he had just received from Richardson. When Packard, the third lieutenant, who was to go in charge of the boat, reported for orders, Harry commanded him to proceed toward the village, and give one of the notes into the hands of the captain of the first tug met. If he met none of the tugs, he was to go on to Newport and find Mr. Newcombe, or Mr. Henry, if either of them were there, and after that report to Captain Steele, and give him the second note. The young officer was not at all pleased with his orders. He would have

been much better satisfied if Harry had sent him ashore to take command of the storming party. He was afraid that if he left the yacht he would not see her again until the pursuit of the pirates was ended. Captain Steele might tell him to remain at the academy; or, if the principal sent out re-enforcements, he might be ordered to take command of his company (Packard was captain of company C), and that was something he did not want to do. The military would join in the pursuit with alacrity, and make the most strenuous exertions to effect the capture of the Crusoe men, and thus rob the navy of the honors now almost within its grasp.

Since the advent of the Storm King, there had been a hot rivalry existing between the military and naval portions of the academy, and many a stormy debate had been held as to the relative merits of the two branches of the service. The military officers said that the navy would do well enough to convey transports of troops in time of war, and that was all it was good for. The hard fighting was always done on the land, and the victories that decided the war were gained by the soldiers.

"Sour grapes!" Harry would always reply. "If I were in your places, I would not run down a thing, after trying my best to win it. You landlubbers burned gallons of midnight oil in preparing for the naval examination. I heard more than one among you say that he would rather be a midshipman than major of the battalion; and now, because you failed to gain any position on board the yacht, the navy is of no account. As for

hard fighting—why, fellows, you must have forgotten your history, if you ever knew any thing about it. Take the case of the *Bon Homme Richard*, in her fight with the *Serapis*! The action lasted three hours and a half, and, during that time, one hundred and fifty, out of the three hundred and twenty men who composed the crew of the *Richard*, were killed and wounded. The loss on board the *Serapis* was about the same. Nearly one-half the men on board the two vessels fell in the fight, and that is something you never heard of in a modern land engagement. And, more than that, the fire of the enemy was not the only thing Commodore Jones had to contend with. The *Richard* was in flames from the beginning. In the heat of the action she sprang a leak, and the master-at-arms, believing that she was about to sink, released a hundred British prisoners who were confined in the hold.”

“Did n’t he deserve to be pitched overboard?” asked Jackson.

“This thing can never be decided by argument, fellows,” said Major Williams. “I wish something would turn up, so that we might have a chance to show ourselves.”

“So do I,” answered Harry. “We would soon convince you that the infantry of the Newport Academy is a slow coach compared with its navy.”

But for a long time that “something” did not “turn up,” and the rival students despaired of ever having an opportunity to test their respective abilities. If Tom

Newcombe had only been there to organize another runaway expedition; or if some discontented boy could be found to take his place! But no one thought of deserting the academy now that the grand commander was gone, and the students, determined to excel their opponents in every thing, devoted themselves to their studies. Each side put forward its best scholars for the valedictory and other academic honors, and some of those who were the loudest in denouncing the navy, picked out the offices on board the yacht that they thought themselves competent to fill, and worked night and day to prepare for the examination. But now came Tom Newcombe and his band of outlaws, and gave them the very opportunity they had so long wished for. To the soldiers he did not come so much as an incendiary as a solution. They wanted to capture him simply to beat the navy. The reason why Packard was in no hurry to go back to the academy was, because if he and his boat's crew were ordered to join their company, they would be obliged to work against their favorite branch of the service, and they wanted to assist it by every means in their power.

When the jolly-boat had left the yacht, Harry took his stand on the quarter-deck, and watched the shoals as closely as ever a cat watched a mouse. His crew was now reduced to seven men—a small force with which to board the Sweepstakes, but still the first lieutenant wished she would come out. He knew that his note to Captain Steele would bring all the troops at the academy about the cove, and he was impatient to have the work done before

they arrived. The captain would soon be on hand to take command of the vessel, and then, if the Crusoe men were captured by the navy, the lion's share of the honors would fall upon the shoulders that wore the double anchors. Captain Steele was a great man at the academy already, and he did not need any more glory; but Harry did. It might be a point in his favor at the next examination. He kept the yacht sailing back and forth, as close to the entrance to the channel as he dared to go, ready at an instant's warning to intercept the pirate captain; but he never came. Somebody else came, however. It was the midshipman with his company of small-armed men. He had built a bridge in ten minutes after Tom destroyed the other, and led his men at a reckless pace down the path into the cove, only to find it deserted. He met no desperate Crusoe band, drawn up in battle array, to dispute his advance. There was the cabin they had occupied, and a few useless articles they had left scattered about, but nothing was to be seen of them or their vessel.

"They are captured now," exclaimed the midshipman, joyfully. "They have put out to sea again, and I expect they are in Harry Green's clutches by this time."

Richardson frantically searched every nook and corner of the cove, to satisfy himself that the pirates had really abandoned their harboring place, and then returned with his men to the top of the cliff, and led them toward the yacht. The young tars went pell-mell down the bank, falling over rocks and logs, and scrambling through

bushes, that made sad work with their new uniforms. They expected to find the crews of the two vessels engaged in a desperate fight; and fearing that Harry, with his small force, might get the worst of the encounter, they were in a great hurry to reach the sloop. A minute's delay on their part might give the pirates time to beat off the boarding party and escape. Breathless and excited, Richardson halted on the bank, and there was the yacht, sailing tranquilly back and forth, and not another vessel in sight.

"Storm King, ahoy!" yelled the midshipman, utterly amazed, and wondering what sort of a craft the Sweepstakes was, anyhow, that she could slip out of a narrow channel under the very noses of so many watchful students. "Where is she, sir?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked the first lieutenant, beginning to feel uneasy at once.

"The schooner. She has left the cove. Did n't you see her when she went by you, sir?"

Harry understood from this that the Sweepstakes had again escaped. She certainly had not run past him, as the midshipman had intimated; the Crusoe men could not have taken her out of the cove and carried her across the island, and yet she had escaped. Harry asked himself if he had ever seen her at all that night. He turned and gazed at the second lieutenant, who stood at his side looking the very picture of consternation and bewilderment.

"I do n't understand it, sir," said the latter.

"Neither do I," replied Harry. "Run alongside the bank and take those men on board."

While the order was being obeyed, Harry paced up and down the deck, racking his brain in the hope of finding some explanation for this second disappearance of the schooner; but the only conclusion he could come to was, that he had been outwitted in some mysterious way, and that Tom Newcombe, or whoever was the presiding genius of the Crusoe band, possessed more brains than he had given him credit for. He saw now that the pirate captain knew what he was doing when he ran into the cove.

"I will tell you what I think about it, Harry," exclaimed Johnny Harding, who was the first to board the sloop. "The Sweepstakes crossed the shoals farther down."

"Impossible!" cried the first lieutenant.

"Perhaps it is, but how, then, could she get out of the cove without your knowing something about it? From this time forward it will be hard work to make me believe that any thing is impossible. If a man had told you, an hour ago, that a boat could live on those shoals, you would have thought he was crazy, would n't you?"

By this time the midshipman came up to report, and after Harry had listened to his story, and held a short consultation with Jackson, he admitted that Johnny's idea concerning the manner of the schooner's escape was correct. He ordered the second lieutenant to fill away for the narrows, and once more the Storm King went dashing over the waves in pursuit of the Crusoe men. But there was

little enthusiasm among her officers. A stern chase is always a long one, and they were following a vessel that could sail three feet to the yacht's two. The young sailors thought of the military, and looked anxious.

When the yacht was fairly under way, an eager group gathered on the forecastle to listen to a smooth-tongued fellow who related to them the particulars of the fight at the bridge; and, on the quarter-deck, Johnny Harding entertained the officers with a recital of his adventures. When he finished his story, he was in his turn astonished at what they had to say of the attempt the captain of the *Crusoe* band had made to destroy their vessel.

"Any sensible boy could have told that Tom would come to something like this," said Johnny, as he went below with the first lieutenant to look at the galley. "A fellow can't keep such company as he has been keeping for the last three months, without getting into serious trouble, sooner or later."

The two friends talked about Tom's probable future, until they were interrupted by the entrance of the officer of the deck, who informed Harry that a tug was following them down the narrows, and that she had whistled three times—indicating a desire to communicate with the yacht. Harry hurried on deck, gave Jackson the necessary orders, and the *Storm King* was thrown up into the wind to wait for the approaching vessel.

"Tug ahoy!" shouted the officer of the deck, when he heard the bell ring to "slow down."

"*Storm King*!" was the response.

"That's Captain Steele," said Harry. "I wish he had stayed away a little longer, for I do n't like to give up the command without having accomplished any thing. Man the side, Mr. Jackson."

The young commander was received by the first lieutenant, the officer of the deck, and four side boys, each of the latter holding a lantern to light him on board. Tom Newcombe had greatly admired him when he was nothing more than an adjutant, and if he could have seen him when he stepped on board his vessel he would willingly have given every thing he possessed to have been in his place. No doubt the wide difference that existed between the captain and himself would have served to confirm him in the opinion he had long entertained—that this was a hard world, and he the unluckiest boy in it.

Tom was not the only one who would have been glad to stand in Captain Steele's boots. The students all envied him, and especially when they saw him in his naval uniform. He presented a fine appearance on horseback, at the head of the battalion, but he looked better with his jaunty-cap and the six stripes of gold lace and star he wore on his arms. Then he had so much authority, and there were the privileges to which his double rank entitled him. He was allowed to decide certain questions of discipline without an appeal to the principal. He was at liberty to go on a cruise in the Storm King twice each week, and he could select the days for the sport. If he wanted to visit Newport at any time after study

hours, all he had to do was to report to the principal that he was going; and, if he did not feel like walking, there was a horse always at his service. He and the major had a cosy little room of their own at the academy, nicely furnished, and plentifully supplied with books, and no one, not even the teachers, ever intruded there. The privileges and comforts that fell to his lot were highly prized by the students, and it was no wonder that they envied him, and declared that he should not hold the honors longer than the next examination. Lieutenant Green and Major Williams were his principal rivals. Harry, like a good many others, cared nothing for the lieutenant-colonel's commission, but he did want to command the yacht, and the captain knew it and was afraid of him.

When the young commander came on board his vessel he lifted his cap, saluting first the quarter-deck and then the officers; but, being too excited to maintain his dignity, he exclaimed, as he shook Johnny warmly by the hand:

"What does this mean, Harry? You are not running away from the enemy?"

The first lieutenant was not allowed an opportunity to reply, for he was immediately assailed on all sides. The tug was loaded with students (she had also brought back Lieutenant Packard and his boat's crew), and Major Williams and several other military officers had accompanied the captain on board the yacht. They were intensely excited and impatient, and nearly overwhelmed

Harry with their questions and their eager demands to be led to the hiding-place of the Crusoe men without an instant's delay, and the babel that arose from the quarter-deck effectually drowned the lieutenant's voice when he attempted to reply.

The soldiers did not hesitate to follow the example set them by their officers. They poured over the rail and engaged in loud conversation with the foremast hands, and, for a few seconds, the confusion and noise were enough to drive one distracted. Harry tried in vain to make himself understood, and was finally obliged to fall back on his authority as commander of the vessel. He made a motion to Jackson, who hurried off to the fore-castle, and a moment afterward the boatswain's whistle was heard above the tumult, followed by the command : "Hear there, fore and aft ! Keep silence, every body !"

However much the impatient military might have been disposed to disregard a request, they could not refuse to yield obedience to an order when it came from the lawful master of the vessel.

"Now," said Harry, when quiet had been restored, "ask your questions one at a time, and I will answer them if I can. In the first place, captain, I am not running away from the pirate ; I am pursuing him. I thought I had cornered him in the cove, but he has got out, and how he did it is a mystery to me."

"Escaped !" exclaimed the major, in disgust.

Without noticing the interruption, Harry went on to tell Captain Steele what he had done, and to describe to

him the movements of the phantom schooner, which filled every body with astonishment. The major and his officers listened attentively to all that was said, and exchanged significant winks with one another. The chase after the pirates promised to be interesting, and to afford them full scope for the exercise of all the judgment and foresight they possessed, and if the skipper of the Sweepstakes continued to show the skill he had thus far exhibited, he might succeed in getting safely on the sea in spite of all their efforts to capture him. They hoped to obtain some clue to his intended movements, but the officers of the yacht were as much in the dark as themselves.

"I might have known better than to ask any information of you," said the major. "If you could put your finger on Tom Newcombe at this moment you would n't tell me."

"Indeed I would," replied Harry, honestly. "If the Crusoe men were simply runaway students, and were guilty of no more serious offense than deserting the academy, perhaps I should decline to give you any assistance in the way of advice or information. If they escaped, there would be no great harm done. But Tom Newcombe must not be allowed to remain at liberty after trying to burn our vessel, and if we do n't catch him I hope you will. If you are smart enough to do it, you will simply be performing an act of justice, and you can claim the honors."

"Well, we'll be off," said the major. "If you want

some help we'll make fast to you and tow you down the narrows."

Harry looked at the captain, but the latter had not yet assumed the command, and had nothing to say, so the lieutenant replied that he was much obliged for the offer of assistance, but, if it was all the same to the major, he would use his own motive power.

"All right," said Williams. "We wish you the best of luck, but that won't help you any; and so you might as well go back to the academy. You have had the 'pirates,' as you call them, twice within your grasp, and allowed them to escape. Just let us put our eyes on them once! The next time you see us we'll have them prisoners."

The major and his officers went on board the tug, which steamed down the narrows, and the Storm King, as soon as the jolly-boat had been hoisted at the davits, followed after. The captain now intimated that he was ready to take command of the vessel, and Harry assumed the duties of executive, while Jackson modestly took his place with the other watch officers. They all heard what the major said, and laughed at it, but they were by no means in as good spirits as they pretended to be. They wished he and his men had stayed away a little longer. The navy had heavy odds to contend against, and some of the officers thought their rivals stood an excellent chance of snatching from their grasp the honors they had hoped to win by their cruise after the pirates. Major Williams was working for promotion, and he possessed a

decided advantage over the captain, having a tug and two companies of infantry under his command. More than that, there was another tug in pursuit of the Crusoe men, having on board the principal, Mr. Newcombe, Mr. Henry, two constables, and two more companies of infantry under Spencer, the ranking captain. The commander of the Storm King was not so much afraid of Williams as he was of Spencer. The former, if he found himself in need of advice, could consult only with his officers and the captain of the tug, while Spencer's movements would be directed by the "brains" of the academy.

"We must look to our laurels now," said Captain Steele. "Have you any thing to propose? Shall we go out to sea, or stay in the bay?"

"Let us remain here, by all means," replied the first lieutenant, who had talked the matter over with Johnny. "My idea is, that we ought to begin a thorough search of these islands. Tom isn't foolish enough to keep on out to sea now, for it is nearly daylight."

The captain thought the suggestion a good one, and he proceeded to act upon it. Deer Island came first on the list, and, by the time the sun arose, he had sailed around it without discovering any signs of the Crusoe band. "Now comes the creek," said he. "Mr. Green, have the jolly-boat called away, and send Mr. Jackson aft."

"I'd like to go with him, Bill," said Johnny.

"You won't see any comfort if you do. The jolly-boat can't seat more than three fellows."

"I do n't care for comfort. If you will let Jackson take me as far as the shore I will get out and walk."

"Go ahead, and I will tell him to call you when he gets ready to come back. While you are gone I'll run down and look at the other islands."

In a few minutes the jolly-boat, with an armed crew at the oars, and Johnny Harding crouching in the bow, disappeared among the reeds and bushes that lined the banks of the creek, and Captain Steele, unwilling to waste an instant of time, filled away to continue his search among the lower islands. Had he known all that was to happen in that creek before he saw his boat's crew again, he might not have been in so great a hurry to leave them.

Jackson and his men wondered why Johnny had come ashore, and if they had asked him for a reason, the only one he could have offered was that he desired to be doing something. He believed that the Crusoe men were concealed in some place where the sloop would not be likely to go, and, if he took a run about the interior of the island he might, perhaps, obtain some clue to their whereabouts. Jackson set him ashore, and continued his voyage of discovery up the creek, and half an hour afterward came in sight of the tall, raking masts of the Sweepstakes rising above the bushes. His first impulse was to make the best of his way back to his vessel and report the matter to the captain, but he knew that the Storm King was a mile down the bay by that time, and before she could return to the creek the Crusoe men

might be a long distance from there. They were slippery fellows—they had three times succeeded in making their escape when Jackson would have staked his chances of promotion on their capture—and now that he had found their vessel again, he did not want to lose sight of her. He peered through the bushes, but could see no signs of life about the schooner. Perhaps her crew, believing themselves safe from pursuit, had gone to sleep; and, if that was the case, could he not board the vessel and secure them before they recovered their wits sufficiently to resist him? Midshipman Richardson had dared to attack them with a force no larger than the one now at his command, and had nearly succeeded in capturing Tom Newcombe, and that, too, when the pirates were wide-awake and ready for him. Was he afraid to follow in the lead of an inferior officer—a boy scarcely more than half his size? Jackson told himself that he was not, and that if he could once get his hands on Tom's collar he would like to see him escape.

“Give way together,” said he, in an excited whisper, “and stand by me, no matter what happens.”

A few swift, silent strokes carried them up the creek to the edge of the bushes that surrounded the Sweepstakes, and then the oars were drawn in, and the crew forced the jolly-boat ahead by pulling at the bushes and reeds. When she came alongside the schooner the lieutenant drew himself up and looked over the rail. The deck was deserted; neither the robbers nor the Crusoe men were in sight.

"Perhaps they are below," said Jackson. "We will go on board and make a rush for the cabin. If they are down there, and we can shut the door on them, we'll have them safe enough."

The boat's crew clambered over the rail and moved across the deck with noiseless steps. They had nearly reached the companion-way, and Jackson was in the act of reaching out his hand to close the door, when, as if by magic, two figures appeared at the head of the ladder, and a brace of revolvers were leveled full at their heads.

"Do n't move hand or foot," said a gruff voice.

The students stood as if petrified.

CHAPTER XX

A CHAPTER OF INCIDENTS.



WHILE the robbers were lamenting the loss of their money, and vowing vengeance against the Crusoe men, they had determined upon a course of action, which promised, before long, to turn Sam Barton's triumph into defeat. They saw through his plan very easily. They knew that it was not his intention to remain long away from his vessel. They would search the woods along the bank of the creek, and, if they failed to find him, they would conceal themselves, and when he returned on board the schooner at night, they would punish him and his men in a way they had not thought of. They would tie them hand and foot, and turn the Sweepstakes adrift. The current of the creek would carry her out into the bay, where she would soon be discovered, and taken in charge by some of her pursuers. If Sam had told the truth about his exploits, he might be deprived of his liberty for a year or two; and that, the robbers thought, would be ample revenge for the temporary loss of their money. When they saw the jolly-boat approaching, they concealed themselves behind the rail to observe her movements. The success of

their plans now depended upon the course her commanding officer might see fit to pursue. If he came on board the schooner, so that they could capture him, and prevent him from returning to his friends with a report of the discovery he had made, every thing would be well with them; but if he went back to the bay after re-enforcements, their game was up. They waited impatiently for Jackson to make up his mind what he would do. When they saw the jolly-boat coming toward the bushes, they hastily retreated to the cabin; and, just at the moment when the second lieutenant was congratulating himself on his success, they sprang up and compelled his surrender.

"We are all right now," said Sanders, in a tone of satisfaction. "Keep perfectly quiet, and no harm shall be done you."

As the burglar spoke he handed his revolver to his companion, pulled some pieces of rope from his pocket, and before the students had fairly recovered from their bewilderment, they were powerless to resist, even if they had been foolish enough to think of it. The robbers lifted them in their arms, carried them down the ladder into the cabin, thence into the hold, and laid them in a row as if they had been logs of wood.

"We shall leave you here," said Sanders, "while we go ashore and hunt up the Crusoe men. You didn't see them while you were coming up the creek, did you?"

Jackson replied sullenly in the negative.

"Well, they are around somewhere, hidden away in the bushes. They stole our money."

The second lieutenant, who was quite as much interested in the recovery of the seven thousand dollars as was Johnny Harding, suddenly became very talkative, and wanted to know all about it; but the robber only told him that Sam and his men had, by some means, obtained possession of the valise while he was asleep; that he knew they were not far off, and that he would have the money in his hands again by that time the next morning, and be miles from there. "I never, in my life, was guilty of so stupid a piece of business before," said Sanders, in disgust. "The idea of two grown men depending upon a lot of little boys to take them to a place of safety! We ought to lose the money, and be caught besides."

"That's just my opinion," replied Jackson, heartily. "If you don't look out some 'little boys' will get the better of you yet."

The robber answered that he would risk that, and after closing and locking the door of the hold, he went ashore in the jolly-boat with his companion, to begin the pursuit of the governor and his band.

Meanwhile Johnny Harding was dashing frantically through the bushes, as uneasy as a fish out of water, and perspiring like a butcher. He had a vague idea that he was looking for the Crusoe men and their allies, and that if they were hidden anywhere in that island, he would like to come upon them unobserved, and then go back to the bay after re-enforcements. He was still intensely excited, and perhaps did some queer things, such as looking up into the trees, as if he were hunting for squirrels,

and carefully examining places where one of those little animals could scarcely have found concealment. But nothing rewarded his search, until he suddenly found himself standing upon the bank of the creek, and saw before him the jolly-boat lying where the robbers had left it, and the schooner made fast to the bushes a little way from the shore. Quick as a flash Johnny dropped behind a log, and cautiously raised his head to survey the scene.

“Now look here,” said he, digging his fingers into his head to stir up his ideas, “something has been going on. Where’s Jackson? that’s the question. He’s been around, for here is the jolly-boat. I must find out what this means—I am going on board that schooner. If the Crusoe men are there, I can’t get into any worse scrapes than I have already been in to-night; and if they are not, I’ll take the Sweepstakes down the creek. That will cut off all chance of escape for the pirates, unless they steal a boat from some of the farmers; and I don’t think they will attempt that in broad daylight.”

Johnny was highly elated with the idea of capturing the schooner. What a fine thing it would be for him if he, alone and unaided, could run her out into the bay, and give her up to Captain Steele! But, after all, he was in no hurry to attempt it. There might be danger in it, and Johnny did not care to run any risks. He remained in his concealment until he had satisfied himself that the Sweepstakes had either been abandoned, or else that her crew was sound asleep; and then he stepped into the jolly-boat, and pushed it from the bank. Armed with

the club he had picked up in the cove, he walked over the deck without discovering the enemy, and after a long and careful examination of the cabin from the head of the companion ladder, he mustered up courage enough to descend into it. He looked into the bunks, and under the table, but there was no one there. Then he tried the door which led into the hold, and nearly jumped from the deck, when a voice from the inside inquired :

“ Who ’s that ? ”

The only thing that restrained Johnny from taking to his heels, and making the best of his way to the shore, was the thought that he recognized the voice, and that it did not belong to either of the robbers, nor to any member of the Crusoe band. Even if it was an enemy in the hold, he had nothing to fear from him, for the door was locked ; and, while on deck, he had noticed that all the hatches were fastened down.

“ Who ’s there, I say ? ” repeated the voice.

“ Harding,” replied Johnny. “ Have you any thing to say to him ? ”

“ Talk of your good genius, and you are sure to receive a visit from him. Yes, we’ve a good deal to say to you. Come in and release us. We’re prisoners.”

Johnny stood for an instant looking at the door in blank amazement, and then began to bustle about the cabin. He did not stop to ask any questions, for he recognized Jackson’s voice now. After a few desperate but unsuccessful attempts to open the door, he seized a handspike, with which he speedily demolished the lock ;

then, picking up his club again, he cautiously opened the door, and saw the three prisoners lying in a row on the floor of the hold. "What in the name of wonder are you doing there?" asked Johnny.

"Now, do you suppose we would stay here if we could help ourselves?" demanded Jackson. "I say, Harding, we've good news for you. Sam Barton's got your money."

"No!" exclaimed Johnny, bringing his club against the door with a force that threatened to drive it from its hinges. "How do you know?"

"We heard it from the burglars, who are out now somewhere hunting up the Crusoe men. I'd like to know how much longer you are going to stand there looking at us."

Johnny was so astonished and delighted by the intelligence he had just received, that he forgot all about the prisoners, until these words of Jackson recalled him to his senses. While he was releasing them, the lieutenant repeated what the robber had told him, which made the clerk so excited that he could scarcely stand still. He was in a great hurry to return to the Storm King now, and so were the students; and in two minutes after Johnny had freed them from their bonds, hasty preparations were being made to get the schooner under-way.

"There is no possible chance for any backset this time," said the lieutenant. "The Sweepstakes is our prize. The pirates can't escape now, for there is no cove here with secret passage ways for them to take refuge in. What's the matter, Phillips?"

"Sink my tarry wig!" exclaimed the young sailor. "Just see there, sir!"

Jackson looked toward the opposite side of the creek, and who should he discover but Tom Newcombe, crawling along almost on his hands and knees, and making all haste to get into the bushes out of sight. In his hand he carried the valise containing the seven thousand dollars. Jackson and his friends looked at him a moment, then at one another, and made a simultaneous rush for the jolly-boat; and Jonnny Harding was in so great a hurry that he shoved the boat from the schooner, almost before the others had time to jump into her.

"Oars! Let fall! Give way together!" commanded the lieutenant, in a fever of excitement, as soon as the jolly-boat was clear of the bushes. "Stand by to jump out, and give chase the instant we touch the bank."

"I don't think we'll have to give chase at all," said Johnny. "What's the reason he doesn't run, I wonder? He is standing there in the bushes looking at us. We're after you, Tom Newcombe!"

"O, now, what do you want with me?" drawled the captain of the Crusoe band.

"We want you and that money, and we're bound to have you, too. It's all up with you now."

"I can't see it. You had better keep off, for you will find me a desperate man." As the skipper spoke he raised a club and shook it threateningly at the boat's crew.

Tom's subsequent actions greatly surprised the lieutenant. Instead of taking to his heels he removed his coat

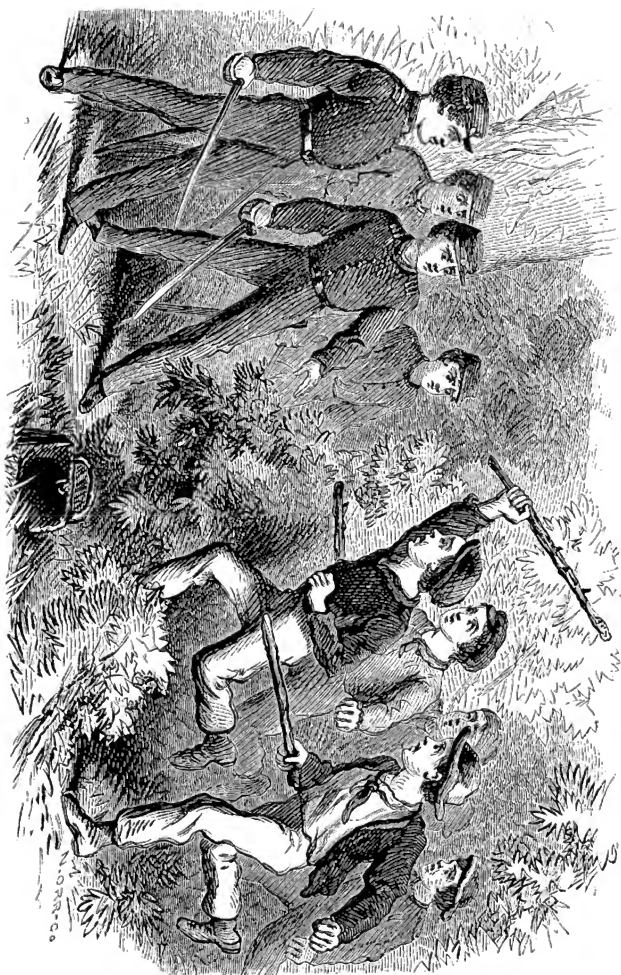
and hat, deliberately placed them upon the ground beside the valise, rolled up his sleeves, tested the strength of his club across his knee, and acted altogether as if he were preparing for a desperate encounter. He kept one eye on the jolly-boat all the while, and the moment she touched the bank, and Johnny Harding sprang out, he caught up the valise and disappeared in the bushes.

"What do you suppose he means?" asked Jackson. "Was he trying to frighten us?"

"If he was, he didn't succeed," replied Johnny, hurriedly. "We've got him at last. Tom never was much of a runner, and I'll agree to catch him in two minutes by the watch. And for a sixpence I'll insure his capture and the recovery of the money."

The boat's crew dashed into the bushes in pursuit of the flying skipper, and before Johnny's two minutes had expired they were almost within reach of him. A few steps more would have brought them near enough to seize him by the collar, when, to their amazement, Tom suddenly dropped the valise, faced about, and advanced furiously upon Johnny with uplifted bludgeon; at the same instant Sam Barton and his band of outlaws arose from the bushes on all sides of them and rushed forward, brandishing their clubs, and yelling like young savages. Tom had lead the boat's crew into an ambush.

"Rally by fours!" shouted the lieutenant, whipping out his cutlass, which was instantly knocked from his grasp by a vicious blow from a club in the hands of Will Atkins.



"Down with the 'cademy swells!" yelled the governor. "Rush in on 'em! Drop that cheese-knife, spooney, or down comes this yere stick right on top of your cocoa-nut."

The attack was too sudden and furious to be successfully resisted. The Crusoe men rushed to close quarters with the students, the light cutlasses of the latter, which were intended more for show than use, were beaten from their hands, and in scarcely more than five minutes from the time the fight began, Johnny and his friends were prisoners. This was certainly a big "backset," and one they had not dreamed of.

"Well, sir, we done it, didn't we?" panted the governor, leaning on his club, and gazing down at his captives. "That was a splendid idea of your'n, cap'n, an' we've carried it out, too. You see," he added, by way of explanation, "we've been watchin' you ever since you come into the creek. We saw the bugglars capture you sailors, an' we were glad they done it, 'cause it saved us the trouble of doin' it ourselves. We knew when Harding went aboard the schooner, an' when we saw that you were goin' to get her under-way, we studied up a plan to bring you ashore. We could n't think of losin' our vessel, you know—she's got to take us to our island yet—so we hid ourselves in the bushes an' sent the skipper out on the bank with orders to show himself to you. We knew that the sight of him an' the money would fetch you over here, if any thing would, an' we knew, too, that if you did come, we six fellers were men enough

to whip you four in a fair fight. Wasn't it purty well done?"

The young tars thought it was, and wondered that they had not suspected something of the kind. They might have known that Tom, in spite of all his hostile demonstrations, had no intention of fighting them single handed. He was not the boy to put himself in the way of bodily harm if he could avoid it, and, now that it was too late, they were surprised that they had been deceived by so shallow an artifice. The skipper's boldness had blinded them completely. It led them to believe that he had become separated from the rest of the Crusoe men, and that he was alone, and that, realizing his helplessness, and knowing that he could not escape from so swift a runner as Johnny Harding, he had resorted to the desperate expedient of trying to frighten the boat's crew. If the idea of bringing them into an ambush originated with him, it was certainly something for him to be proud of.

"What do you intend to do with us, Sam?" asked Johnny.

"We're just goin' to keep you with us, that's all," replied the governor. "We aint quite foolish enough to let you go back to your friends, 'cause they would come up here an' take our vessel, an' we want to use her to-night. As soon as it comes dark we are goin' to start on our cruise ag'in, an' when we are safe from the Storm King an' all the tugs, we'll set you ashore on some island an' leave you to find your way back to the village as best you can."

The day was a long one to the Crusoe men and their prisoners. They were tired, hungry, sleepy, and thirsty. The creek flowed by within a hundred yards of their concealment, but the governor had issued positive orders that no one should venture near it. Who could tell but that some of the students were sneaking about the island, or that the robbers were concealed among the bushes on the opposite bank, watching for them? The members of the band grumbled, as usual, but submitted—after Will Atkins, who declared that he was going to have a drink of water whether the governor was willing or not, had been taken down and thoroughly shaken—and between sleeping and watching the long hours passed slowly away. The lower the sun sank into the western horizon the longer the hours seemed to grow; but night came at last, and when it had grown quite dark, the governor picked up the valise, and gave the order to start.

“Untie the prisoners’ feet, fellers,” said Sam, “an’ let them walk to the boat. When we get aboard the schooner we’ll pitch into the grub an’ water, and then we’ll be ready to start. Xury, you take charge of the jolly-boat.”

The Governor and Tom, the former holding fast to the valise, were first carried across. They examined the schooner very closely before going on board, but her deck was deserted, and there was no one in the cabin, hold, or galley. The governor drew a long breath of relief. “There’s no arthly use in my sayin’ that I aint afraid of them bugglars,” said he, “’cause I am. I thought sure we’d find ’em stowed away somewhere about the

schooner, but they re ashore lookin' fur us, an' we're all right. Did n't we say that we'd larn 'em a thing or two before we were done with 'em? They're the biggest dunces I ever saw. If they had any sense at all they would know that we would n't desert our vessel fur good. How could we get to our island without her, I'd like to know! Now, Xury, go back with the jolly-boat an' bring two of the prisoners across."

While the jolly-boat was gone Sam and Tom made heavy inroads on the crackers and cheese, and drank a good portion of the small supply of water they had taken on board at the cove, and which was intended to last until they reached the Elizabeth Islands. They were in excellent spirits, and talked and laughed over their meal, telling wonderful stories of what they intended to do when they reached their island, and not forgetting to say a word or two concerning the robbers and the trick they had played upon them. The jolly-boat came back in due time, with Johnny and the lieutenant, who were pulled over the rail, conducted into the cabin, and tumbled into the bunks—not, however, until their feet had once more been securely bound. Johnny, especially, was very roughly handled by Tom Newcombe, who said to him, as he pushed him about :

"I knew I'd have a chance to square yards with you. You will learn, before I am done with you, that a man never makes any thing by imposing upon me. Don't you think I should be serving you right if I were to give you a good thrashing?"

Johnny, who was sitting on one of the bunks, looked down at Tom, and watched him while he tied his feet, but had nothing to say.

"You tormented me almost to death while I was in the village," continued the skipper. "If you passed me fifty times a day, you always had some question to ask about the Crusoe band."

"Well, that was because I felt an interest in the society, and wanted to know how the members were getting on," said Johnny.

"Do you know what I intend to do with you? I shall keep you on board this vessel until we arrive within a few miles of our island. Lie down there, now, and keep quiet."

As Tom said this he pushed Johnny into the bunk and went out, leaving him to his meditations.

If the captain of the pirate vessel could have his own way, the prisoner certainly had a dreary prospect before him. He felt a good deal as did Bob Jennings, when he lay on the sofa in the cabin of the Storm King, and Xury was taking her down the harbor in the face of the tempest. But his situation was worse than the fisher-boy's, for he was to be kept a prisoner until the voyage of the Sweepstakes was nearly ended. There was no sport in being obliged to remain in that hot cabin bound hand and foot; and when he remembered that the night promised to be very dark; that a black cloud hung threateningly in the horizon, and hoarse mutterings of distant thunder had been heard all the afternoon; that the navigation of the

bay was at all times dangerous, and especially during a high wind; that Tom was scarcely sailor enough to handle a sail-boat in calm weather—when Johnny thought of all these things, it may be imagined that he was not very well pleased with his situation. The only consolation he could find was in the hope that the Sweepstakes might be speedily captured.

In half an hour all the prisoners had been stowed away in the bunks, the Crusoe men had satisfied their appetites, and the governor was ready to perform another duty that had been on his mind all the afternoon. It was something he did not like to do; but the well-being of the loyal members of the band demanded it. "Will Atkins," said he, "you an' Jack Spaniard take some grub an' water to the prisoners."

"Atkins! Atkins!" repeated the mutineer. "Can't nobody in this band do nothing except Atkins?"

"Silence!" commanded the chief, sternly. "Do as you are told, to onct, an' without any more growlin'. I've give you one lesson to-day, an' if you don't mind your eye, I'll give you another. Mark you, now. Do n't untie their hands, but feed 'em yourselves, an' give 'em all they want, too."

The discontented members, fearing to disobey, sullenly gathered up an armful of crackers, filled a cup with water, and went into the cabin. The governor watched them suspiciously until they disappeared, and then, turning to Xury, said:

"Well, was I right or wrong?"

"You were right," answered the mate. "They are just spilin' to get their hands on that money, an' I told 'em that I'd help 'em. We've made up a plan to steal the valise when we stop at the Elizabeth Islands fur water."

"I knew I could n't be fooled easy," said the chief, "but I wanted to be sure. I'll fix 'em for that."

The skipper and Friday did not understand this conversation, but the governor in a few words explained. He said that ever since Tom's new idea was communicated to the band, he had been suspicious that Atkins and Jack Spaniard were watching their chance to desert the vessel, and make off with the valise—he had seen it in their eyes. In order to satisfy himself on this point, he had commissioned the mate to pump them. Xury had acted his part well, and having succeeded in making the mutineers believe that he was dissatisfied with the way the affairs of the band were conducted, they had taken him into their confidence. The evidence against them was now conclusive, and the governor thought it high time they were secured and deprived of their power for mischief. The other members of the band thought so, too. The captain, as usual, was very indignant, and would have made a lengthy speech on the subject, had he not been interrupted by the chief, who informed him that it was a time for action, not words.

"Let each of us get a rope," said Sam, "an' we 'll go into the cabin an' make prisoners of 'em. Friday, you an' Xury pitch into Jack Spaniard, an' me an the cap'n

will take care of Atkins. Don't waste no time, now, for it ain't best to give them too much show."

The governor led the way into the cabin, where the mutineers were busy feeding the prisoners. Atkins was holding a cup of water to Johnny's lips. He started and turned pale when he saw the angry looks of the chief, and the rope he carried in his hand, and instead of pouring the water into the prisoner's mouth, he spilled it all down his neck.

"Now, look at that!" said Johnny.

"Aha!" exclaimed the governor, "your looks are enough to tell the whole story. Didn't I say that I knew you an' Jack Spaniard were up to something?"

That was enough for Atkins, who, knowing that he was betrayed, dropped his cup and bounded toward the ladder; but the governor, being on the alert, clasped him in his arms, and with the assistance of Tom Newcombe, secured him very easily. Friday and Xury attacked Jack Spaniard, who, seeing his companion helpless, surrendered without any attempt to resist them.

"This is some of your work," said Atkins, glaring fiercely at the mate.

"Well, I reckon I know that, don't I?" coolly replied Xury.

"An' you promised, honor bright, that you would n't never say a word to any body, an' you shook hands on it."

"All them things go for nothing when a feller's actin' the part of a spy. You went back on me an' the

cap'n when we were in trouble, an' now we are even with you."


"Chuck 'em into the bunks, fellers," said the chief. "We haint got so many men as we had a little while ago, but them that's left are true an' law-abidin'. Cap'n, we'll get under-way, now."

When the new prisoners had been disposed of, Tom led the way to the deck, and after half an hour's hard work, the Sweepstakes was got clear of the bushes, the sails were hoisted, and the Crusoe men and their captives were moving swiftly down the creek toward the bay. While the governor and Tom were coiling down the ropes and clearing up the deck, the latter repeated what he had said to Johnny Harding; and after a few objections from Sam, who did not want to be bothered long with the prisoners, it was decided that Johnny ought to be punished, and that the best way to do it would be to put him ashore on some desert island in the middle of the ocean, and leave him to take his chances of finding his way back to Newport. The captain could not rest easy until he had communicated this decision to Johnny; so when every thing was made snug, and Friday had been stationed on the forecastle to act as look-out, he ran down into the cabin. At the foot of the ladder, he came to a sudden stop, and stood with his neck stretched out, his mouth open, and his eyes almost starting from their sockets. In the middle of the cabin was a small hatchway, which led into a a little store-room where 'Squire Thompson kept his nets and other fishing-tackle stored

away, and that hatchway was open, and a pair of evil looking eyes, that belonged to Sanders the burglar, were peering over the combings. The Crusoe men were not rid of the robbers after all.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

AD the eyes that were peering at him over the combings of the hatchway belonged to his father instead of Sanders, Tom could not have been more astounded. His first impulse was to run on deck and report the matter to the governor, but when he had taken a second thought he knew that would be of no use, for, before the crew could be collected, the burglars would have ample time to come out of the store-room, and if they once gained a footing on deck they would soon square accounts with the Crusoe men. The skipper knew that Sanders must be driven back again at once, and that he must do it.

“You young rascal!” said the burglar, placing his hands against the hatch, which he had lifted with his head, “we’re going to settle with you now. I wouldn’t be in your boots for a shilling.”

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when an incident happened that confounded the robber and not a little astonished the prisoners, who lay in their bunks interested witnesses of what was going on. Tom, seeing that Sanders was preparing to ascend into the cabin,

took a step forward, sprang into the air like an antelope and alighted with both feet on the hatch, which crashed down upon the burglar's head, knocking him back into the store-room. The captain's heels, at the same time, flew up very suddenly, and he sat down on the hatch, holding it in its place. So unexpected was the movement, and so suddenly was it executed, that it was completely successful. Sanders was stretched at full length on the floor of the store-room, and before he could recover his feet, Tom had thrown the bar over the hatch, and secured it with the padlock, which lay close at hand. There were eight prisoners on board the Sweepstakes now.

"Well, captain," exclaimed Johnny Harding, "if you are a Crusoe man, I must say that was well done. The burglars are safe, and if Mr. Henry was here, I know he would thank you."

The skipper sat on the hatch a long time, listening to the movements of the robbers below, and thinking over what he had done, and finally recovered himself sufficiently to go on deck and report the matter. The governor could scarcely believe his ears. He complimented Tom highly for his promptness and decision, declared that it beat any thing that had happened in the band since he became governor, and ran down into the cabin to satisfy himself that the captain had securely fastened the hatch. The robbers were storming about in their narrow prison like caged hyenas, calling upon Tom to raise the hatch at once, or they would take a terrible revenge

upon him when they got out. They threatened to sink the vessel, to set fire to her, to shoot their revolvers through the deck, and to do many other desperate things, but they did not succeed in bringing any response from the Crusoe men. They were thinking about something else. They were asking themselves what they should do with the burglars, now that they had secured them. They could not keep them in their prison forever, and it would be dangerous to let them out. If they were confined during the voyage they would starve to death, and if the Crusoe men raised the hatch to pass provisions and water down to them, the robbers might use their revolvers. Sam could see no way out of this new difficulty, and he heartily wished Sanders and his companion a hundred miles from there. But he could not waste time in thinking about them when business of more importance demanded his attention. After a careful examination of the prisoners' bonds he went on deck with the captain, and found that the schooner was on the point of entering the bay, and that she had left the creek just in time to escape being blockaded. The yacht was in plain sight.

"There's them spooneys again, cap'n," said Xury.

"Let them come," replied Tom, indifferently. "Show them our heels, Mr. Mate."

In obedience to the order Xury turned the Sweepstakes down the bay, the sheets were let out, and then began a race which did not end in one hour, nor two, but continued all night, and was carried on in the face of a

tempest, which, although by no means as terrible as the one the Storm King had weathered on another memorable occasion, was still severe enough to test the sea-going qualities of the little vessels, and the skill and judgment of their respective commanders. The cloud that had been hanging in the horizon all the afternoon gradually overspread the sky, shutting out the light of the stars, and shrouding the bay in intense darkness; the lightning flashed, the peals of thunder were almost incessant, the wind blew a gale, and at midnight both pursuers and pursued wished themselves safe in some snug harbor, out of reach of the storm. Captain Steele and his executive knew the bay as well as they knew their Latin grammars, and it made little difference to them whether it was midnight or noon, so long as the wind was fair and the sea smooth. If the first lieutenant had been in command of the yacht, she never would have been caught out in that gale. Harry would have found a safe harbor in the creek, and remained there until the storm was over, but the captain thought he was as skillful a sailor as Tom Newcombe or any other member of the band, and when he saw the Sweepstakes standing boldly out to sea he filled away in pursuit of her. The light canvas was taken in, every thing made snug on board, two trusty men sent to the wheel, and, under a close-reefed jib and mainsail, the yacht dashed over the waves after the pirate. The hatches were battened down, all hands kept on deck, and the young commander, in his pea-jacket and tarpaulin, and with his speaking trumpet in his hand, stood on the

quarter-deck, alert and watchful. Every flash of lightning revealed the Sweepstakes laboring heavily, and making but poor headway under the management of her ignorant and unskillful crew.

On board the schooner things looked desolate and discouraging. As the cloud arose and the fierce gusts of wind began to ruffle the waters of the bay, causing the Sweepstakes to careen wildly under her heavy canvas, Captain Newcombe felt his courage gradually oozing out at the ends of his fingers. It was a fine thing to be master of a vessel in calm weather, but, when a storm was brewing, the case was different.

"Skipper," said the chief, "had n't we better be doin' something? I think it would be a good plan to take them jibs and top-sails in before they take themselves out."

Tom cast a frightened glance around him—at the sails, the foam-capped waves, the angry clouds, and in a weak voice declared that it was utterly impossible for him to manage the vessel any longer.

"There is n't one man in a hundred who could endure what I have been through since last night," said he, dolefully. "A fellow can't keep up long with no sleep, and nothing but crackers and cheese to eat. I'm sick, Sam, and you or Xury will have to take command."

"Now look a here, cap'n," exclaimed the chief, who became alarmed at the prospect of being obliged to assume so much responsibility, "can't you stand it just fur to-night, or fur an hour or two?"

"No, nor for a single minute," drawled Tom. "I'm awful sick. I turn the command over to you. Carry as much or as little sail as you please, and if any thing serious happens, call me. I'm done for." And Sam thought he was, for he let go the rail and sank down in a heap upon the deck.

"Well, if this yere do n't beat all the world," exclaimed the governor, in dismay, hurrying aft to consult with Xury. "Here's the cap'n clean pegged out, a storm comin' up, every rag spread, them spooneys close at our heels, an' only three of us left to make things safe, an' to defend the vessel if we are ketched. What's to be done? Can you be cap'n?"

"I reckon," replied the mate. "If you'll stand at the wheel, an' be ready to spill the sails when I give the word, me an' Friday will take 'em in."

"Be lively about it," said the governor, glancing uneasily toward the yacht, which, being kept in better trim than the schooner, was riding the waves as gracefully as ever, and gaining rapidly. "Them spooneys aint wastin' no time."

In twenty minutes the top-sails and jibs had been taken in and stowed away, the fore and main-sails close reefed, and the Sweepstakes began to make better weather of it, but the work had delayed her considerably, and, when the new captain took his place at the wheel again, the yacht was scarcely two hundred yards distant. During the remainder of the night she kept close behind the schooner, and Sam, watching her movements as the light-

ing revealed them to him, and noting the skill with which she was handled, told himself more than once that he had been sadly mistaken in the opinions he had formed concerning the students. He had hailed the approach of the storm with delight, believing that the young tars, rather than face it, would turn and run for the village; but there they were, following close in his wake, and showing no disposition to abandon the chase. The governor did not like to see so much perseverance exhibited by the students. It showed that they were determined to capture him.

And how fared it with the prisoners all this while, and how must they have felt, tossed about in their bunks as the schooner labored through the waves? They would have possessed wonderful courage, indeed, if they had not been thoroughly alarmed at their situation. They passed the long, dreary hours in listening to the roar of the wind, the washing of the waves against the sides of the vessel, the despairing cries and appeals that came from the store-room under the deck, the frantic blows that resounded on the hatch, as the robbers made desperate but ineffectual attempts to escape from their prison, and waiting, with all the fortitude they could command, to feel the schooner sinking under them, or to hear the crash that would tell them she had been driven ashore in the darkness. How they struggled to free themselves from their bonds, and how they shouted to attract the attention of the schooner's crew, adding their cries to those of the robbers, and promising, if they were released,

to assist in navigating the vessel, and to make no attempt at escape—promises that would have been faithfully kept, if the governor had heard and listened to them. It was a night never to be forgotten.

Daylight came at last, and, when objects in the cabin could be discerned, Johnny Harding with difficulty rolled out of his bunk and hobbled to one of the windows in the stern, and looked out. The waves still ran high, but the storm had passed away, the sky was clear, and the gale had subsided into a capital sailing wind. The headlands at the entrance to Buzzard's Bay had just been passed, and the schooner was in deep water. Close behind her, and in plain view, came the Storm King, lying almost on her side, dipping her huge mainsail into the waves now and then, and dashing the spray furiously about her sharp bows. As Johnny looked at her he saw a couple of young tars mount the ratlines, and a moment afterward the flying-jib was run up, and the gaff-topsail given to the wind. Captain Steele thought he had followed the pirate far enough, and was now going to bring matters to an issue.

"Hurrah for us!" shouted Johnny, in high excitement. "Hurrah for the navy, Captain Steele, Harry Green, and every body, except the Crusoe men! Tumble up, fellows! Come to the window if you can, and you will see a sight that will do your hearts good. Here's the yacht."

"Hurrah!" yelled the students, rolling recklessly out of the bunks, and landing on the deck in one confused heap.

"Well, now, look here! I say! What's the row?" demanded Sam Barton, who at that moment entered the cabin to see that his prisoners were safe.

"Hallo, governor," said Johnny. "How do you feel this fine morning? How are Xury and the Captain? How are your mother and your father? How's your uncle, and all the rest of the Barton family?"

"Eh?" exclaimed Sam, who did not know what to make of this salutation. He looked suspiciously at Johnny, and stepped back and raised the handspike with which he had taken the precaution to arm himself before leaving the deck.

"It's little good that club would do you if my hands and feet were free," said Johnny. "But come here, governor, and tell me if you have seen that nice little vessel out there."

"O, is that what the fuss is about? Yes, I see her, but I won't see her in an hour from now, and neither will you. I can carry as much sail in this sea as she can, an' I've got every rag histed."

"I believe you," said Jackson, from the corner where he had been thrown by a sudden lurch of the vessel. "O dear! Sam, untie my hands, so that I can rub my head."

The governor, who had also been stretched at full length on the floor of the cabin, arose to his feet with an angry exclamation, and disappeared in the hold; and when he came out his arms were filled with provisions. Johnny and his companions looked at him with hungry

eyes; but the governor, having no time to waste upon them, and thinking more of himself and men than of the comfort of his prisoners, hurried on deck, and seating himself beside Friday, who was at the wheel, prepared to enjoy his breakfast and watch his enemies at the same time. We ought to say that Tom was again master of the Sweepstakes. His illness passed away with the storm, and he was now so far recovered that he was able to do full justice to the crackers and cheese.

The crew of the Storm King fared as well as if they had been at the academy. During the previous day, they spoke the principal's tug, which supplied them with an abundance of cooked rations. Part of them, too, were in better trim than the Crusoe men; for, when the storm began to abate, about three o'clock, the starboard watch had gone below, and enjoyed two hours refreshing sleep. When the crew had eaten breakfast, and the mess-tables had been cleared away, the port watch were ordered to stand by their hammocks. They obeyed, and went below, but did not stay there long. They were too excited to sleep. They returned to the deck again, one after the other, and the captain raised no objections to it. He was a boy himself; and he knew that he would not turn in, while the pirates were in plain sight, for any body.

All that forenoon the chase continued. The yacht sailed better in a heavy sea than the schooner, and the Crusoe men could not shake her off. She followed them like an avenging spirit; but, as the waves began to subside, the Sweepstakes gradually drew away from her, and

might again have succeeded in effecting her escape, had not two tugs, loaded with students, suddenly come into view from behind one of the neighboring islands, where they had been snugly sheltered during the storm. A cheer, which came faintly to the ears of the Storm King's crew, arose from the tugs, as they changed their course and steamed toward the pirate. The young tars growled lustily, and looked toward the captain, who stood with his hands behind his back, dividing his attention between the tugs and the schooner. The army and navy were now fairly matched, and Tom Newcombe was to determine the winning party. If he kept on out to sea, the military would bear off the honors; but if he ran toward the nearest island, which was scarcely a quarter of a mile distant, he would be captured by the navy. If he had never been cornered before, he was now. There was not the smallest chance for escape.

Captain Steele leveled his glass at the schooner, and could see that there was great excitement among her crew. They were gathered about the wheel, flourishing their arms wildly, some apparently advising one thing, and some another; but the matter was finally settled by the skipper, who took his place at the helm and turned the Sweepstakes toward the island. It was plain to them all that their cruise was ended at last. Their vessel had served them faithfully, but she could be of no further use to them now. They must run her ashore and take to the woods.

The Storm King still followed close at the heels of

the flying schooner. She seemed to glance over the waves without touching them; but, fast as she went, the tugs, which were following a course at right angles with her own, gained rapidly, rolling the smoke in dense volumes from their chimneys, and lashing the water furiously with their wheels. For a time it seemed that they would cut the schooner off from the island altogether; but Tom gradually changed his course as he approached them, and ran into a little bay in the island, just as the nearest tug, which was scarcely fifty yards distant, stopped and began to use her lead-line.

"Hold on, Tom Newcombe!" yelled the major, as the schooner dashed by the tug. "You're my prisoner. Stop, I tell you! Captain, why *don't* you go on? Can't you see that yacht coming?"

"Yes, I see her," replied the master of the tug, "and I know she will capture the schooner. But I can't help it, for I can't run my vessel without plenty of water. There's a bar across the mouth of that bay, and I can't pass it."

At this moment Spencer's tug came up, and stopped near the other; and, while the impatient young officers and their men were crowding about the captains, and urging them to go ahead, whether there was water enough to float the tugs or not, the Storm King swept by like the wind. There was no noise or confusion on her deck. The young tars were all at their stations; a party of boarders, under the command of Harry Green, stood on the forecastle; Captain Steele, a little pale with excite-

ment, but quite self-possessed and confident, was perched on the rail, holding fast to the shrouds, and as his vessel bounded past the tugs he lifted his cap to his discomfited rivals. Five minutes afterward the yacht's canvas was lying on her deck; her bowsprit was lashed fast to the schooner's foremast; Harry Green's boarders had released Johnny Harding and the jolly-boat's crew, and made prisoners of Friday and Xury just as they were on the point of leaping overboard; Johnny had secured the valise, snatched an empty pistol from a sailor, opened the hatchway that led into the store-room, and compelled the burglars to pass up their revolvers, threatening to shoot them on the spot if they did not instantly comply with his demands; and a small skiff, which Captain Steele had picked up the day before, to supply the place of the jolly-boat, was in hot pursuit of the governor and Tom Newcombe, who were tossing about in the waves, and swimming lustily for the shore. Sam was overtaken and secured in spite of his desperate struggles; and, during the delay he occasioned, Tom reached the beach and disappeared in the woods. He was the only one of the Crusoe band who escaped.

The next morning, about ten o'clock, Johnny Harding, flushed with triumph and excitement, burst into the store where Mr. Henry was busy at his desk, and, with the air of one who did not think he had done any thing very remarkable, placed the valise containing the seven thousand dollars upon the counter, pulled a pair of navy revolvers from his pockets and laid them beside the

valise, and then, seeing that the store had not yet been swept out, seized a broom and went to work. He did not say a word, and neither did Mr. Henry, until he had counted the money, when he came out from behind the counter and shook hands with his clerk so cordially that Johnny dropped the broom and raised one knee almost up to his chin.

"I never expected to see it again," said the grocer. "How shall I ever repay you, Johnny? What do you want?"

"I want something good to eat, and about forty-eight hours' sleep," replied the clerk.

Mr. Henry told him to go home and get it, and Johnny started, but it was an hour before he got out of the store. It soon became known throughout the village that the yacht and two of the tugs had returned with the robbers and some of the Crusoe men, and the people wanted to hear all the particulars. Some questioned the students, others came into the store, and Johnny could not get off until he had recounted his exploits. He concluded by telling how he had come by the revolvers, and said if no one had a better claim to them than he had, he would keep them to remember the robbers by.

It was a long time before the events of that night ceased to be a topic of conversation. Every body was astonished, especially at the daring and vindictive spirit exhibited by Tom Newcombe, and many were the conjectures indulged in as to what had become of him. The trial of the "pirates," as the villagers soon learned to call

them, came off in due time, and Sanders and his companion went to the State's prison, and the Crusoe men to the House of Refuge. People wondered what would have been done with Tom if he had been there.

And where was Tom all this while? When the students left the island, after spending the afternoon and a portion of the night in searching for him, the captain of the Crusoe band came out from a hollow log where he had been concealed, and sat down upon it, to think over the past, and speculate upon the future. He was his own master now; he could go and come when he pleased, and there was no one to trouble him even with advice. How he had longed for this freedom, and, now that he had got it, how little he enjoyed it. Homeless, friendless, penniless, a feeling of desolation he had never before experienced came over him, and Tom would have given the universe, had he possessed it, to be able to live over the last three months of his life. How dreary seemed the world, now that he was alone in it, and how he would have appreciated his home could he have gone back there. He was now a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and he continued his life as he had begun it, flying from one thing to another, and searching for something he never found—perfect immunity from care and trouble. His adventures would fill a volume, but with them we have nothing to do. It only remains for us to see whether or not he accomplished any thing in the world.

Thirty-five years have passed since the scenes we have attempted to describe in this story were enacted, and during that time some great changes have taken place in Newport. From a thriving village it has grown into a city of respectable size, and boasts of a mayor and councilmen. Of the boys of our acquaintance some have passed away and been forgotten, others have grown to manhood, and now occupy the positions in business and society once held by their fathers, and another generation of youth has sprung up to take the places of our heroes of thirty-five years ago. The military academy is now the pride of the city, and boasts of a respectable navy. The Storm King, after many a pleasant cruise, gave way to three small schooners, which are now anchored in the rear of the academy grounds. The students of the present day are as proud of them as ever Captain Steele was of his yacht, and their rigging is as faultless, and they are in every respect as well kept as is the saucy revenue cutter, moored a little way from them.

Business in Mr. Newcombe's old office is still carried on, but under a new proprietor, and with a different staff of clerks. The huge machinery in the elevator is rumbling, and a vessel at the wharf is being relieved of her cargo of wheat. A group of gentlemen are standing near, watching the operation, and conversing. One of them is in his shirt-sleeves, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a pencil behind his ear. Over a mass of thick, bushy whiskers peep forth a pair of eyes as sharp as those of a ferret and brim-full of fun and mischief.

That is Johnny Harding—councilman Harding, with a fair prospect of becoming something more at the next election—a prosperous, hard-working business man, the owner of the largest grocery-store in the city, popular with every body, and as big a torment as ever. Opposite to him stands another of our old acquaintances, a sailor on the face of him, although there is nothing about his dress to indicate his calling. His name is Harry Green, and he is the commander of the revenue cutter, lying at anchor near the academy squadron. At the examination following the famous cruise of the Storm King, Captain Steele, much to his regret, was obliged to take a step backward and give place to Harry, who assumed double honors—those of colonel of the battalion and captain of the yacht, both of which he held until he graduated. It was no easy task to lead a hundred smart, ambitious students, every one of whom cast longing eyes toward the shoulder-straps he wore, but Harry was sensible enough to know that if any thing is worth having it is worth striving for, and he never wasted a minute, either in school or out. When he completed the course at the academy he obtained the appointment of third lieutenant in the revenue service, and slowly worked his way up to captain. He has experienced harder storms than those he weathered in the yacht, and on two occasions he led a party of boarders, when those who opposed him had something more formidable than boat-hooks and hand-spikes to fight with. He has smelt powder, heard the whistle of hostile bullets, and felt their force, too, but he

says that he has seldom been more excited than he was when he stood on the Storm King's rail as she was swinging toward Tom Newcombe's pirate vessel. Harry often speaks of that cruise, and affirms that he shall never cease to be proud of the part he bore in it.

The other gentleman of the group also answers to the title of captain, and no one could recognize in him the ragged, barefooted fisher-boy of thirty-five years ago. But it is Bob Jennings, and he is to-day the proprietor of the office and elevator that formerly belonged to Mr. Newcombe. Although he is not so large a ship-owner, he is wealthy, and his business is still increasing. The schooner discharging her cargo is named after his benefactor, J. M. Evans, and the ship which is receiving it, and which is to take it to Europe, is the *Go Ahead*. Strangers think it an odd name for a vessel, but those who are acquainted with the history of her owner do not wonder at it. Those who enter the office see over the captain's desk two mottoes in gilt letters, to the faithful observance of which he says he owes his success in life. We know that at one time Bob lost faith in his first motto, but the experience of a life-time has convinced him that it can be depended upon.

While Captain Jennings and his friends stood on the wharf conversing, a party of half a dozen students, all of them officers belonging to the academy squadron, came up. Among them were the admiral, fleet captain, and the commanders of the vessels. The foremost, a boy about fifteen years of age, who carried in his hand a

model of a full-rigged ship, with sails and ropes complete, wore an anchor and gold leaf in his shoulder-strap, and four stripes of gold lace and a star on each arm. He was Bob Jennings, junior, the second lieutenant of the *Zephyr*. His brother George, two years younger, was the ranking midshipman on board the *White Cloud*, the flag-ship, and the swiftest vessel in the squadron. The young officers appeared to be excited about something, for they were walking rapidly and talking very earnestly.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Mr. Harding, when the students had come within speaking distance. "What are you going to do with that ship, Bob? Do you intend to enter her at the next regatta to beat the *White Cloud*?"

"No, sir," replied the lieutenant. "I bought it to put on the mantle in my room. Say, father, do you know there is a man in Fishertown who has n't had any thing to eat for two days?"

"No," replied Captain Jennings, "I didn't know it. Who is he?"

"Jack Crosstree, that old fisherman."

"He is a man-of-war's man, too," chimed in the midshipman, "and we're not going to stand by and see him suffer."

"Of course not," said Mr. Harding, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "you are old men-of-war's men yourselves, you know, and you must always be ready to assist a shipmate in distress."

"That's our opinion exactly," said the admiral.

"We're going up to the academy now to bring down a good dinner for him."

"Who is Jack Crosstree?" asked Captain Green, when the students had passed out of hearing.

"No one around here knows much about him," replied the grocer. "He is a sea-faring man, and, if one might judge by his appearance, he has seen some hard times. He has been all over the world, spent the best part of his life in the navy, lost his leg during the war, and has settled down here in Newport to pass the remainder of his days as a fisherman, but he does n't seem to be making a paying business of it. Suppose we go down and talk to him."

Jack Crosstree, as he called himself, had been in Newport about six months, and during that time he had shunned every body except the students, who paid frequent visits to his cabin to listen to his stories, when he happened to be in the humor to tell them, and to purchase specimens of his handiwork in the shape of models of yawls, jolly-boats, and full-rigged ships. He was a sullen and morose old fellow, too lazy to work, and had a great deal to say about the cruelty and injustice of the world.

A few minutes walk brought the three friends to a dilapidated cabin on the beach, whose appearance and surroundings testified, in unmistakable language, to the poverty and shiftlessness of its occupant. A broken, leaky scow, that would have borne no comparison to Bob Jennings's old Go Ahead, was drawn up on the beach,

a tattered sail leaned against the eaves, one side of the roof of the cabin was gone, and the door was so nearly off its hinges, that, when Captain Green rapped upon it with his cane, it fell down with a loud crash.

"Avast, there!" growled a hoarse voice, from the inside. "You've done it now, have n't you?"

"Beg pardon," said Mr. Harding; "but we had no idea that your door was in so shaky a condition, you know. Why do n't you get some hinges for it? And I believe, if you would put a few boards on that roof, you would sleep better of stormy nights."

"Ah, yes; it's all well enough for you to talk about boards and hinges—you, who, if you stand in need of such things, have only to go and buy them. But, with me, the case is different; although I've seen the time when I was better off than any of you. Let the door alone, and go off about your business."

Mr. Harding and his friends paid no attention to the ravings of the old fisherman. They raised the broken door and leaned it against the wall, and moved toward the corner from whence the voice proceeded. There, upon a miserable pallet, lay a gaunt and crippled form, partly concealed by a ragged blanket which was drawn over his head. Captain Green gently unclasped the withered fingers that were holding fast to it, and removed the blanket, revealing first a shock of gray, uncombed hair, and next a bronzed and weather-beaten face, on which the signs of a reckless and dissolute life were plainly visible.

“Go away, I tell you,” cried the fisherman, striving to draw the blanket over his head again. “Who asked you to come here? I know who you are, and I don’t want any thing to do with you—I don’t want to see you.”

Something in the features, or the voice, must have struck Captain Green as being familiar, for he bent lower over the prostrate form, and when he straightened up, the face he turned toward his companions expressed the most intense amazement.

“IT IS TOM NEWCOMBE!” said he.

“Ay, it is Tom Newcombe—or, rather, all there is left of him—starving to death here in his native village, with no one, among all those who once pretended to be his friends, to lend him a helping hand. You can’t assist me in my distress, but you can come here to torment me with your presence—to show me what *you* are, and what *I might have been*. If I had only listened to the advice so often offered me, I might have been the equal of any of you,” added the sailor, in a repentant frame of mind. “But it’s too late now. Why can’t you go away and let me alone? I’ll never trouble you, and I don’t want you to bother me.”

He sank back upon the bed exhausted, and turned his face to the wall, while his visitors gazed down at him in silence. Who could have told that there ever would have existed so great a difference between these four men, who were once boys together? Three of them were beloved and respected by all who knew them, held positions of

honor and trust, were cheerful, happy, and contented, and, better than all, could look back upon lives well spent; the other was a mere wreck of humanity, a feeble old man, when he ought to have been in his prime, living in that miserable hovel, friendless and alone, destitute of all comforts, dissatisfied with himself and every body, and reaping at last the reward of a dissipated, wasted existence. His bad habits had grown and strengthened, and prepared the way for others of a worse character, and now he did not possess the power, even if he had possessed the inclination, to shake them off.

A man seldom if ever abandons his settled habits and modes of life at that age; and the helping hands that were extended to him, and the encouraging words he heard on every side, from the friends of his boyhood, could effect no change for the better in Tom's condition. He is to-day a miserable, indolent, worthless being, subsisting principally upon the charity of Captain Jennings. His history is well known to the village boys, who see nothing in it that will induce them to follow in the footsteps of THE ROLLING STONE.

THE END.

